

DEEP SOUTH REGION

August 23rd – 25th, 2019 Skirmish Results

By: Steve Sheldon

The last Deep South skirmish of the year to be held at Brierfield Ironworks State Park got off to a start late on a hot, humid Friday afternoon. As you might expect for summer in middle Alabama, the weather was especially muggy. Thankfully it was overcast all weekend, but the very thin rain on Saturday made it hard to tell if it was actually raining or if the humidity had simply gotten so high that water was condensing in the air all around us.

The 3rd and 44th Georgia Volunteer Infantry units hosted this month, with individual competition getting underway about 3pm and wrapping up for the day around 5:30pm. Saturday morning found six teams ready to smoke targets at our region's tradition 15-yard Revolver match. This event has been going on for about three years now, and revitalized revolver team shooting in the Deep South Region, where it had all but disappeared. Forrest's Escort took first place, followed by the 14th Mississippi in second, with the 4th Louisiana B team taking third.

After the Revolver match was over, individual shooters took to the line to pack in as many targets as they could until after lunch. The host teams kept the concession stand running all weekend providing tasty treats and ice-cold beverages to wash it all down.

Team competition started up again after lunch first with the Carbine match, which was run in two relays. Five regular companies and one irregular company competed. Once again Forrest's Escort took first place, followed by the 4th Louisiana, with the 14th Mississippi taking third place.



The teams of the first relay of the Carbine match on the line.

The Smoothbore competition got underway following the Carbine match. Five companies of pumpkin-slingers stood on the line, and when it was all over Forrest's Escort took first, followed by the 14th Mississippi, followed by the 4th Louisiana.

Sunday morning found the teams assembled on the field for Opening Ceremonies. After the playing of anthems, and the invocation, and an announcement of the next skirmish hosted by Forrest's Escort in November, the teams retreated to the line to start the Musket match. Five teams held the line. When the smoke cleared, Forrest's Escort held the top spot, followed by the 14th Mississippi, and finally the 44th Georgia bringing up the rear.



News photo by George Vlahakis

Group turns back clock with shooting match at Brierfield

Blue 'n' gray militia do battle, 1860s-style

By George Vlahakis
News correspondent

BRIERFIELD — The smell of hot lead and burnt gunpowder reminds the men gathered here of the battles fought and the lives lost during the Civil War. The war took 600,000 lives, and the men, members of the North-South Skirmish Association (NSSA), are here to pay tribute to soldiers they consider the bravest who ever fought for this country.

The group gathered this past weekend at the Brierfield Ironworks Park in Bibb County for musket, carbine rifle and pistol shooting competitions as part of the Civil War tribute.

More than 100 people and nine regiments, which represent wartime fighting units, traveled from as far away as northern Indiana to take part.

Sporting authentic uniforms and firearms, the group turned back the clock at the park, if one could ignore the automobiles and the occasional camper that passed by.

"Nothing has changed, except we're not shooting at each other," said Grant Lee "Cannonball" Jones, of New Orleans and the 4th Louisiana Infantry. "We're just shooting at breakable targets."

"When the spirit of it gets going right, and the action gets going good, you just kind of slip back (in history) a little bit," said John Hathaway, of Eatonton, Ga., and a member of the reorganized 3rd Georgia Volunteer Regiment.

"Especially when the smoke gets real thick and the battle gets real hot, it just sends a chill up your spine," Hathaway said.

The men consider the Civil War an honorable war.

"We don't try to convey the feeling that the South was wrong, or that if the South had won it would have been in the best interest of this country," said John Hayes, of Birmingham and a member of 6th Alabama Infantry (also called the "Raccoon Roughs").

"But we do try to promote an understanding of what brought on the Civil War," said Hayes, whose group is the state's only NSSA-sanctioned group.

Emory Morgan, NSSA's Deep South Regional Commander, recalled when a member's wife, dressed in a bell-hoop dress, played a solemn rendition of "Dixie" on a Sunday morning at last year's gathering. The wife of a newer member, from the North, started to smile, not fully understanding that this rendition was a sad tribute to the men who died for the South.

"A grin started to come across her face, but it never finished, because she realized what the song meant," Morgan said.

While the Confederate Army was well-represented at the gathering this weekend, "soldiers" from Union regiments were welcome and did something that didn't happen during the war — they fought alongside the rebels in various shooting competitions.

One "Yankee," Harris Opfer of Anderson, Ind., and the 110th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, was well-respected by his Confederate counterparts. Opfer has won 35 shooting honors in 16 competitions so far this year.

Competitions aside, many NSSA members said they consider the true value of their organization to be insight into America's bitterest war.

"It's an excellent way of getting the feel for history," Hayes said. "The more you learn about it, the more respect you have for people on both sides."

An old newspaper clipping from November 1985. Over 100 people from 9 regiments attended.

"...old times there are not forgotten, look away, look away, look away, Dixie Land."



Team Event Results

	Smoothbore	Carbine	Musket	Revolver
1 st	Forrest Escort	Forrest Escort	Forrest Escort	44 th Georgia
2 nd	14 th Mississippi	4 th Louisiana	14 th Mississippi	14 th Mississippi
3 rd	4 th Louisiana	14 th Mississippi	44 th Georgia	4 th Louisiana B

Individual Event Results

Revolver	25 Yard	50 Yard	Aggregate
1 st	Steve Sheldon	Steve Sheldon	Steve Sheldon

Smoothbore	25 Yard	50 Yard	Aggregate
1 st	Josh Sasser	Jim Koch	Josh Sasser
2 nd	Steve Sheldon	Charlie Bondurant	Charlie Bondurant
3 rd	Charlie Bondurant	Josh Sasser	Jim Koch

Carbine	50 Yard	100 Yard	Aggregate
1 st	Steve Sheldon	Jim Wood	Steve Sheldon
2 nd	Charlie Bondurant	Josh Sasser	Jim Wood
3 rd	Jim Koch	Steve Sheldon	Jim Koch

Musket	50 Yard	100 Yard	Aggregate
1 st	Steve Sheldon	Larry Kirshner	Jim Koch
2 nd	Larry Kirshner	Steve Sheldon	Steve Sheldon
3 rd	Jim Koch	Jim Koch	Jim Koch

Breech	50 Yard	100 Yard	Aggregate
1 st	Kenny Carmichael	Kenny Carmichael	Kenny Carmichael

Grand Agg	
1 st	Jim Koch



The next and final Deep South Region skirmish of the year will be held at Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park in Eva, Tennessee, November 1st – 3rd, hosted by Forrest's Escort.