

Deep South Region



4th Louisiana Delta Rifles

Skirmish Results February 2020

Steve Sheldon

The 4th LA led the charge into the 2020 skirmish season with another event hosted at Brierfield Ironworks State Park. The site is steeped with Civil War history, with the centerpiece being the ruins of the furnace that was once the heart of the Bibb County Iron Company. This company produced high-quality steel for the Confederacy and was forced into acquisition by the Confederacy in 1863, becoming the only ironworks owned by the Confederacy. The output of the ironworks was sent to the Selma Arsenal, where it was used to produce Brooke naval rifles (artillery pieces) as well as plate armor for ironclad ships. The ironworks was destroyed in 1865 by the 10th Missouri Volunteer Cavalry during Wilson's Raid. The ironworks was re-opened after the war, co-owned by the former Chief of Confederate Ordnance, Josiah Gorgas. The furnace went out for good in 1894. During the WWII era the furnace was pillaged for brick, resulting in its deteriorated condition today.

Today, the park boasts a large covered range and a field that extends to nearly 100 yards. Combined with the attached campground and cabins for rent, it's a perfect skirmish location and it is thus no wonder that most of the Deep South Region's skirmishes are held there.



Photo credits: Left: State Archive. Right: tripadvisor.com



We have had a tremendously wet winter this year in Alabama, with hardly a week going by without rain since before Christmas. But fortune has been with us the last few years, and this year was no exception. A perfect window of good weather opened up for us starting Thursday morning during setup and held for us for most of the weekend. Saturday morning was clear and cold, with all the numerous puddles on the field frozen over. A bit of rain pestered us Sunday morning, driving opening ceremonies and the Musket shooting under the covered firing line.

A pleasant surprise awaited us when we showed up on Thursday to begin prepping for the event – Michael Shannon had re-made all the target frames! This was a big time saver as we did not have to devote any time (or money) to repairing them for the start of the season. Instead, we marked the field and deployed the frames, and then set about making up target boxes, cleaning the kitchen, and all the other work that goes into getting a good skirmish underway. Russ Weekly and Steve Sheldon pulled everything out of the team trailer and the team was able to get good inventory of all of our skirmish supplies.

As is usual in the Deep South Region, shooting started on Friday around noon with Individuals. Individual turnout was low for the weekend with only 17 individual entrants, and zero Revolver entries. Jim Wood and Russ Weekly sold and scored individual targets on Friday, with Rod Harbin taking over as chief statistician on Saturday and Sunday. Our “newest” member, Michael Maroney, is actually a founding member of the 4th LA, and has come back to skirmishing after a 30+ year hiatus! Mike was a big help as a line safety all weekend. Bob Kelley was chief cook as usual, and Mark Hubbs pitched in everywhere and was a big help with his truck to haul off the garbage during cleanup.

Saturday morning Tara and Lethrenn Sheldon opened up the Snack Shack with All-You-Can-Eat Flapjacks, with sausages and coffee and sodas available as well. We had a disappointing turnout for the “Can’t Miss ‘Em” Revolver Match, with only two teams braving the frost. The “Can’t Miss ‘Em” Revolver Match has become a Deep South Regional tradition over the last few years. For this event, all targets are shot at 15 yards. The die-hard veterans of the 14th Mississippi and the 4th Tennessee braved the cold, with the 14th MS coming out on top for first place.

After the Revolver match, the field was reconfigured back for Individual shooting, which continued until just after noon. As the Individual matches were wrapping up, Bob Kelley once again chased away the smell of black powder smoke with the smoke of grilled hamburgers and hotdogs.



A brilliant Alabama winter day for Saturday's activities!

With Individual shooting concluded for the weekend, the Carbine match began. By this time the sun had burned off the ice on the field and temperatures were in the 50s – warm enough for people to ditch their coats! Six teams took up their positions in two relays. When all was said and done Forrest's Escort took first place, followed by the 3rd Georgia in second place, and the 44th Georgia bringing up the rear in third place.

Smoothbore shooting wrapped up the day's shooting, with the final shots in a race with the sun for who would hit the ground first. After the smoke cleared, Forrest's Escort held the lead, followed by the 14th Mississippi in second, with the 3rd Georgia taking third.

After everything was squared away from the day's shooting, the spread was laid out for the Fourth Louisiana's famous potluck dinner! We had our usual giant pot of Jambalaya, and Bob Kelley's famous pulled pork, combined with lots of other dishes the 4th LA team members had brought for the occasion. Southern green beans, baked beans, cole slaw, potato salad, king cake, and more!



The dinner spread put on by the Delta Rifles!

Like sneaky Yankees, some rain had snuck up on our position early Sunday morning, and it was still hanging around as we got ready for Opening Ceremonies. So, we held the ceremonies from under the covered firing line. Hoot Gibson led the invocation. By the time we had finished, the rain had moved off for the day, but we had already decided to shoot from under cover, so we did.



Opening Ceremonies on the firing line.

We had six teams on the line for the musket match. As usual, Forrest's Escort came out on top, followed by the 44th Georgia, followed by the 3rd GA.

The awards ceremony began as soon as the final scores were tallied. This year we had some new "medals". Laser-engraved wood provided the top shooters with custom tokens for their efforts. We're saving the metal for the Confederate war effort! 😊

Nancy Hill, Commander of the 14th Mississippi, requests that all teams confirm their intent to attend the April skirmish by the March skirmish. If there are not enough confirmations, the skirmish may be cancelled.

The next skirmish will be hosted by the 20th Georgia, March 13-15, at Brierfield.

Team Event Results

	Smoothbore	Carbine	Musket	Revolver
1 st	Forrest Escort	Forrest Escort	Forrest Escort	14 th Mississippi
2 nd	14 th Mississippi	3 rd Georgia	14 th Mississippi	4 th Tennessee
3 rd	3 rd Georgia	44 th Georgia	44 th Georgia	<i>SLACKERS!</i>

Individual Event Results

Smoothbore	25 Yard		50 Yard		Aggregate	
1 st	Jim Koch	50XXX	Charlie Bondurant	46	Jim Koch	95XXX
2 nd	Charlie Bondurant	47XX	Eddie Lawley	45XX	Charlie Bondurant	93XX
3 rd	John Hamilton	47X	Jim Koch	45	Eddie Lawley	91XXX

Carbine	50 Yard		100 Yard		Aggregate	
1 st	Jim Koch	45XX	Charlie Bondurant	47	Jim Koch	86XX
2 nd	John Hamilton	44X	Eddie Lawley	44	Charlie Bondurant	86
3 rd	Gary #12	40	Jim Koch	41	Eddie Lawley	84

Musket	50 Yard		100 Yard		Aggregate	
1 st	Charlie Bondurant	47	Charlie Bondurant	48	Charlie Bondurant	95
2 nd	Jim Koch	41	Jim Koch	44	Jim Koch	83
3 rd	Tom Penney	33	Eddie Lawley	42	Tom Penney	74

Musket / Carbine Agg		
1 st	Charlie Bondurant	181

Breechloader	50 Yard		100 Yard		Aggregate	
1 st	Charlie Bondurant	39	Charlie Bondurant	39	Charlie Bondurant	78

Grand Agg		
1 st	Charlie Bondurant	181
2 nd	Jim Koch	170

