



The Battlefield Dispatch

The Other Eye of Maria

By *Administrative Officer*
Andrea Catroppa

A visitor. An employee. An opportunity to see this land in a way most will never experience. A thousand words no picture can describe.

Flying over the crisp, clear, aquamarine waters, one would not suspect the devastation and destruction that spared no part of the island of Puerto Rico. As the plane drew closer to the island, what was thought at first sight to be boats headed southwest was actually debris pulled from the island and scattered over the waters.

Upon arrival in the very hot and humid San Juan airport, I could not believe my eyes. There were people standing, sitting, lying on the floor, crammed into the small terminal. Making our way from the door to the baggage area took a bit of agility, navigating through the people desperate to leave everything behind.

The ride to Castillo San Cristóbal, where many took refuge during the storm, was like a scene from a war zone. Metal was twisted like a pretzel, stop signs uprooted with cement and mud still attached, and roofs missing or caved in, yet people were walking around like it was the height of tourist season. The lines to get gas, at those few stations available, were up to a 6 hour wait. Stores were closed and boarded up, light poles were strewn throughout the grounds and traffic control devices were dark.

Time on the island was not without its

high points. The people I encountered were so gracious, thanking our team for being there to help. I struck up conversations with people wherever I went and just asked how they weathered the storm. Everyone I spoke with lost electricity. Most homes had no running water. The damage shared by folks ranged from losing everything but the clothes they were wearing to the loss of a roof and flooding. The consistent response by those affected was, “but others lost more.” I was humbled by the attitudes of those who had lost so much but were thankful for what remained.



Castillo San Cristóbal
NPS Image

Time was spent assisting the Caribbean parks to clean up and rebuild. Our work was a collaborative effort with assistance from the National Park Service nationwide. The Fort Jefferson boat arrived after a 72- hour jaunt through the seas from Florida to bring supplies to the island. We unloaded what we needed and organized what was needed for St. Johns and St. Croix. The dock was full of boats coming in and out, dropping off supplies and resources for the island. At one point, there was a backlog of over 3,000 containers that needed to be distributed but due to the shortage of hands, things sat for a period

of time. Morning briefings were often suspended temporarily as the low flying Red Cross and military helicopters were so loud, we could not hear our own thoughts.

The Eastern Incident Management Team I was with faced many obstacles due to the logistical challenges of getting what we needed to this 110-by- 35 mile island. When things happen stateside, we simply run down the street to our local Home Depot or Staples or “click” and Amazon Prime will arrive in two days. This was not the case to be enjoyed. If not for the assistance of FEMA, we would have had issues with water, as it was unsafe to drink from the tap. Getting to any store not only took a great deal of patience waiting in traffic, but lines were long and outside in the heat. Home Depot required that you present your list of needs and then you were escorted through the store with an employee. Home Depot with no air conditioning, in 95 degree heat outside, did not make for a pleasant experience. Shelves were almost bare and batteries and generators were nowhere to be found. Driving away in our truck loaded with supplies, we passed lines outside of Walmart and Sams Club that had to be at least an hour long. People waited patiently in the heat and humidity with nothing more than umbrellas and chairs. At first, grocery stores were not open but slowly obtained supplies for the citizens and fuel for the generators. An employee of the island shared that they were allowing 50 people at a time in to shop.

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Superintendent's Sidebar

By Superintendent Brad Bennett

Of the 417 special places protected and preserved in our National Park System, 70 are located here in the Southeast Region. Each year, the regional director recognizes one park program that has made a particularly exceptional contribution to the profession of interpretation and education in the National Park Service. I am pleased and proud to announce that Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park is the national park recently selected as the 2016 recipient of the prestigious *Keeper of the Light Award*.

Led by Kim Coons, Chief of Interpretation and Resource Education, this park's interpretation and education team has developed and implemented a successful and wide-ranging outreach program to engage, educate, and employ youth in communities in around the park, from rural Georgia to urban Chattanooga. She has achieved these results by leading her team of interpretive rangers beyond the boundaries of the park, into underserved neighborhoods, and through collaborative efforts with a variety of nonprofit partners. Among the organizations that have supported and contributed to these efforts are Eastern National, the Friends of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, the Friends of Moccasin Bend, the National Park Foundation, Glass House Collective, the Bessie Smith Cultural Center and Chattanooga African American Museum, Outdoor Chattanooga, and the Southeast Conservation Corps. Inside and outside the park, rangers help the public understand and appreciate not only what happened during the autumn of 1863, but also what happened as a consequence of the Civil War in the decades to follow, including the Reconstruction era and the establishment of this national military park in 1890, the first of its kind in the United States.

Congratulations to Kim and her team! When you see a ranger, thank them for a job well done.

Hunting for "Easter Eggs"

By Preservationist Kiel Rommel

As you tour Chickamauga Battlefield and the surrounding area, you will notice an abundant amount of monuments in the fields, along the tour route, and deep in the backcountry. Monuments vary in shape, size, and composition but all identify units, headquarters placement, or areas of fallen commanding officers. While all the monuments have the typical relief or inscription, you can find irregularities, or "Easter Eggs," on, and in, a select few.

Indiana markers are made of Oolitic Limestone from that state. As you observe these markers, look closely and you can identify natural history within the stone. Fossiliferous limestone is any type of limestone that contains an abundance of fossils or fossil traces. Littered on the surface of these monuments, you will see the fossilized remains of prehistoric creatures.



Left: Oolitic Limestone from Indiana is a fossiliferous limestone, meaning it contains fossils or fossil traces.
NPS Image

Right: A member of the 1st Illinois Volunteer Cavalry stationed near Brotherton Field in 1898 carved his unit information in one of the Union monuments as a last reminder of his time training on Chickamauga Battlefield during the Spanish American War.
NPS Image



During the summer of 2017, resource management staff discovered unique vandalism scratched into the surface of a monument. It was only after the monument was washed and wet that the vandalism revealed itself. Park interpretative staff possibly solved the mystery associated with this vandalism. In 1898, soldiers from the 1st Illinois Cavalry were camped near this monument in preparation for deployment during the Spanish American War. It is likely that an unidentified soldier left his mark during the pre-deployment.

Some "Easter Eggs" have been identified. It is possible that many still exist. Please observe that climbing on any of the monuments is not allowed and will lead to intervention by law enforcement. Climbing on monuments can and will lead to resource damage and possible visitor injury. In other words, please look, but do not climb.

You Cannot Always Tell a Book By Its Cover

By Historian Jim Ogden

In its plain black cloth boards and almost always heavily abraded spine title, it is easy to quickly look past it on a used book dealer's shelf. Despite the interest in the Civil War from the 1960s to the 1990s, it could usually be purchased for very little, even in stores with a large history or Civil War section.

The usually long-overlooked book, Henry Van Ness Boynton's *Dedication of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, September 18-20, 1895* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), is one of the most important sources on the creation of the national military park. Essentially the official report of the congressionally mandated and funded formal dedication of the national military park, the volume includes the detailed schedule of all the

the activities being held on the three dedication days in 1895, which included a parade through Chattanooga. Most importantly, the texts of the speeches, delivered by such participants as United States Vice President Adlai Stevenson, the governors of New York, Tennessee, and Indiana, Chattanooga Mayor George Ochs, and Chattanooga Campaign veterans John Palmer, James Longstreet, Oliver O. Howard, and Edward Walthall, are all included.

From this text, readers get the veterans' visions of the national military park as "not in any sense a pleasure ground" but that the "central idea is the restoration of these battlefields to the conditions which existed at the time of the engagement." Most specifically, readers see the sense of reconciliation and reunification that pervaded their effort.

Agreeing to disagree on the causes of the war, the veterans preserved portions of the battlefields where both Union and Confederate troops fought and allowed monuments to be erected to units of both sides. This supported their vision of the national military park being a symbol of a nation once divided, now firmly *reunited* as the "new" United States stepped more prominently onto the world stage. Fortunately, for today's readers, Boynton's volume can be accessed digitally at the following web address: <https://archive.org/details/dedicationofchic00unitiala>

As the nation again grapples with its Civil War, take time to read the thoughts of those who a quarter century after the war created Chickamauga and Chattanooga, our nation's first national military park.

Details Tell the Tale

By Volunteer Coordinator Will Wilson

On Saturday, October 21, 2017, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park hosted volunteers of the park at a recognition dinner held at park headquarters. This was a moment to recognize all of the wonderful people who donate their time and talents to the park. Superintendent Brad Bennett spoke briefly on the many contributions to the park by all of our volunteers. Then, division chiefs recognized the volunteers in their respective divisions and the various jobs they perform.

For fiscal year 2017, the park saw 715 volunteers contribute 11,100 hours of service. Fifty-two new volunteers came on board to serve in regularly scheduled positions. Two-hundred-four youth served as volunteers. The park hosted 20 volunteer work projects, completing trail maintenance, landscape restoration, and monument

preservation. Some of the highlights for the year were the Martin Luther King Day of Service, when 46 individuals volunteered, of whom 34 were youth. Civil War Trust Park Day saw 36 volunteers, of whom 14 were youth. And National Public Lands Day saw 52 volunteers, of whom 23 were youth.

Volunteers contributed a financial value of \$267,954.00 or an average of \$374.76 per volunteer. Volunteers amounted to the equivalent of 5.3 Full Time Employees or a 17.7% increase in workforce capacity. We cannot thank our volunteers enough for all of the work that they do. We would like to also thank the Friends of Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP and the Friends of Moccasin Bend for all of their contributions throughout the year. Our partner organization in Eastern National also needs to be recognized for their support of the park and the many programs they help to fund. Again, we say thank you!



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

In 1863, Union and Confederate forces fought for control of Chattanooga, known as the "Gateway to the Deep South." Confederates were victorious at nearby Chickamauga in September. Renewed fighting in Chattanooga that November provided Union troops with victory and control of the city.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Maria

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Lines were long, patience was a necessity. Trying to work in our make-shift Incident Command Post was a challenge in and of itself. The generators at the park were on their last legs and reminded us multiple times a day.

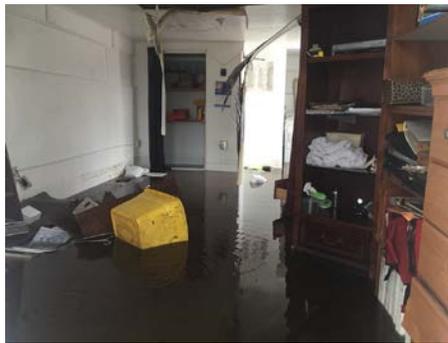


A National Park Service boat docked in Puerto Rico during recovery efforts.
NPS Image

We would start the day in our post dripping in sweat as there was no air conditioning because the generators were down. Mid-morning, we would find a glimmer of relief and have contact with the outside world. By mid-afternoon, everything crashed and we were left to hit the streets looking for supplies to help our parks rebuild. We would find time to step away for

“lunch” but what do you do when stores and restaurants are closed? You find a Walgreens and buy Twizzlers to snack on and maybe a soda or two. As time went on, stores and restaurants were able to get fuel for their generators thus offering a window of service hours to the public.

There is one thing that really stunned me about these parks that were affected by the storm. The employees came to work. Daily, they came to work with a strong sense of purpose. Their homes were affected. Their families and their lives were affected. Some had no running water to bathe in yet they found a way to make it to work every day. I do not speak Spanish, and while most everyone in Puerto Rico does, body language speaks in a way everyone can understand.



Damage is evident from the rising flood waters as well.
NPS Image

I am so glad to have been a part of this effort. Recently, I received an email from a young man who was affected, and he updated me on what has been going on and told me he missed me and our team. The area of San Juan is so much better off than other areas of the island. They are able to find places with generators for power, and a bit of WiFi as well. I take with me a grateful heart knowing that there is a resilience that cannot be undone. There are those with the attitude that nothing will get the best of them as they are too determined to be pushed down. This was a very humbling experience and one that has made me grateful for everything; from my family to friends, to home, to even the traffic.

I could go on and on about the power poles I saw on a house and the homeowners perched outside with a temporary “tent” site so they had a place to lay their heads. I could go on about the views of homes with walls and roofs missing, leaving the structures vulnerable to the eyes of those passersby. What we see on television is just a small glimpse into the world of our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico. The reality is, they are damaged. They are hurting. They have no running water or electricity, and those outside the San Juan limits are even worse off, as they may not see life’s little conveniences restored for 6 months to a year. People are dying and sick because they cannot obtain clean water. Some cannot cool their medications or even get prescriptions refilled. No one has air conditioning, and the elderly have to withstand an environment that is rough on their frail bodies.

I think often of everyone I met there. I wonder about the people I would see on the streets or those pushing a cart of what belongings they had left. I think, “What if that had been my family, my friends, and my park?” Would we, would I, have the same attitude to go forth and do good? People complained here in Georgia about not having electricity for 3 days when Maria made her way through our state. What these people have gone through in Puerto Rico over the past month and a half could perhaps teach us all a lesson or two.



This damage gives a brief glimpse of Hurricane Maria's destruction.
NPS Image

The Battlefield Dispatch is a quarterly publication of Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

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