

# THE FRIENDS OF MOUNT MORIAH CEMETERY PRESENT PARK DAY

Park Day 2015 Issue

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**CIVIL WAR TRUST**

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## From the CWT:

As our nation commemorates the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, volunteers across the country will once again answer their nation's call to service. On **Saturday, March 28, 2015**, history buffs, community leaders and preservationists will team up with the Civil War Trust, History™ and Take Pride in America at more than 98 historic sites across the country to participate in the 19th annual Park Day.

Since its inception in 1996, Park Day has attracted volunteers of all ages and abilities bound by their dedication to serving their communities. In 2014, nearly 9,000 volunteers at 104 sites across the country donated more than 35,000 service hours. This year, organizers hope to build on these impressive figures.



African-American Sailor aboard the USS New Hampshire

## Tattoos: The Original Dog Tags

Today, tattoos are all the rage for men and women. Long before metal “dog tags” were used to identify American servicemen on the battlefield, tattoos served the same purpose for the original “Jack Tars” and “Leathernecks.”

A Navy sailing ship typically had a crew of several hundred men. At the Rendezvous (enlistment), sailors were assigned a unique number and their physical identification, including their tattoos, was also recorded.

For example, Seaman James Forten Dunbar re-enlisted at the Boston, MA Rendezvous, on July 11, 1863. His tattoos were listed as “ra, ship,” indicating a ship on his right arm, followed by “Mermaids” on his “rfa,” or right forearm. His left arm tattoos depicted a “man and woman,” followed by a “family group” on his left forearm.

If a sailor or marine fell to the deck or became a casualty during battle, from shell fragments or wood splinters, often, the only way to identify him was by reference to the ship's muster which listed his tattoos.

Seaman James Forten Dunbar, at the time of his enlistment had already served 37 years in the Navy and went on to survive the Civil War. He died at the Philadelphia Naval Asylum, November 26, 1870.

Seaman Dunbar, born in Philadelphia around 1799, went to sea at the age of 11 as a “cabin

boy” on a merchant ship. His grave is one of the stops on Rev. Marlon Smith's tour, *African American Sailors of the Civil War*, at 11 AM today.



USS Richmond

## New Medal of Honor Grave Discovered

There are currently more than 400 missing Medal of Honor recipient graves, many from the Civil War era. The Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States (MOHHSUS) conducts exhaustive genealogy research in an effort to find and mark the graves of our nation's heroes.

As a result of some great “tombstone detective” work by Karl Jensen of Hackettstown, NJ, Mount Moriah now has a new Medal of Honor grave, number 22.

While searching an obituary database looking for Medal of Honor recipients, Jensen, a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Sgt. Hiram Purcell Camp #104, Lambertville, NJ, discovered an obituary that mentioned the “Medal of Honor Legion's”

attendance at an 1897 funeral in Mount Moriah Cemetery.

The obituary was for Matthew McClelland, Jr. the son of a Navy Medal of Honor recipient, one of the first accredited to the USS *Richmond* during the Civil War. Further research by Jensen uncovered a "body permit" authorizing the removal of Matthew McClelland, Sr. from a vault at Lafayette Cemetery to Mount Moriah, 14 years prior to his son's death. The permit and Mount Moriah's "Alpha" file, confirmed that both father and son were buried in the family's plot at Mount Moriah.

However, a search of the Find-A-Grave online database turned up Medal of Honor recipient Fireman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Matthew McClelland "buried" in a different cemetery, Rosedale, in Bensalem, PA.

Back in 2006, MOHHSUS had traced McClelland, Sr. to Lafayette Cemetery in South Philadelphia through his death certificate. Incorrectly, MOHHSUS assumed that McClelland's grave had been removed to a mass grave at Rosedale Cemetery when Lafayette was closed and cleared.

Philadelphia's death certificate database (which also includes "body" or transit permits recording removals between cemeteries) did not become available "online" (and thus searchable) until 2008. The MOHHSUS search stopped at Lafayette Cemetery's vault.

A VA Medal of Honor grave marker for McClelland was approved and placed at Rosedale Cemetery. But his actual grave site, at Mount Moriah, would remain undiscovered and unmarked for 132 years -- until a few weeks ago.

To confirm Fireman 1<sup>st</sup> Class McClelland's grave site and Jensen's research, volunteers

from the Friends of Mount Moriah Cemetery waited for the ground to thaw in early March to search the plot for any grave markers. Their search turned up three corner markers marked "McCL," but no visible grave marker.

McClelland's actual grave site, now unmarked, is confirmed by Mount Moriah's cemetery records. His grave will now join our list of five other Navy and Marine veterans awaiting their special Medal of Honor VA grave markers.

Learn how Fireman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Matthew McClelland earned his Medal of Honor on Park Day's second tour, ***The USS Richmond's Medal of Honor Graves***, at approximately 12 Noon.



## Look Familiar?

The above photo, of an "Admiralty Plan" or "AP" style anchor, is a "close up" cropped from the USS *Richmond* photo on the previous page.

The 2,604 ton steam "Sloop of War" USS *Richmond*, which saw extensive service during the Civil War, flagship of the Navy's Asiatic Fleet and South Atlantic Squadron, spent its final years as an auxiliary receiving ship at Norfolk Navy Yard, World War 1.

On June 30, 1919, the USS *Richmond* was struck from the Navy's active list and sold to Joseph Hyman and Sons, of Philadelphia, to be broken up for scrap. The *Richmond* arrived in

Philadelphia from Norfolk on August 6, 1919 to a large ceremony attended by the Mayor.

Two of the *Richmond's* 9-inch Dahlgren guns are currently on display at the American Swedish Historical Museum, FDR Park in South Philadelphia. An 8-inch rifled cannon from the *Richmond* can be found at a park in Lambertville, NJ.

The anchor in the cropped photo is nearly identical to the one atop the Naval Asylum Plot's Anchor Monument. We are researching the origin of this anchor, which we suspect was salvaged from the USS *Richmond*.

## Circle of St. John's Forgotten Heroes

Park Day's final tour at 1 PM will visit the graves of Union officers who are buried in Mount Moriah's Masonic Circle. This is the highest point within the cemetery.

Also taking part in Park Day activities will be volunteers from the Lt. Col. Robert H. Archer Camp, #2013, Maryland Division, the Lt. General John C. Pemberton Camp, #2060, Pennsylvania Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the 1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Artillery, a re-enacting group.

These volunteers will help us locate and clear the graves of two Privates from "The Band in the Pines," Confederate veterans who settled in South Philadelphia after the War.



Pvt. Sylvester Bunting, Co. F, 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Virginia Infantry, CSA