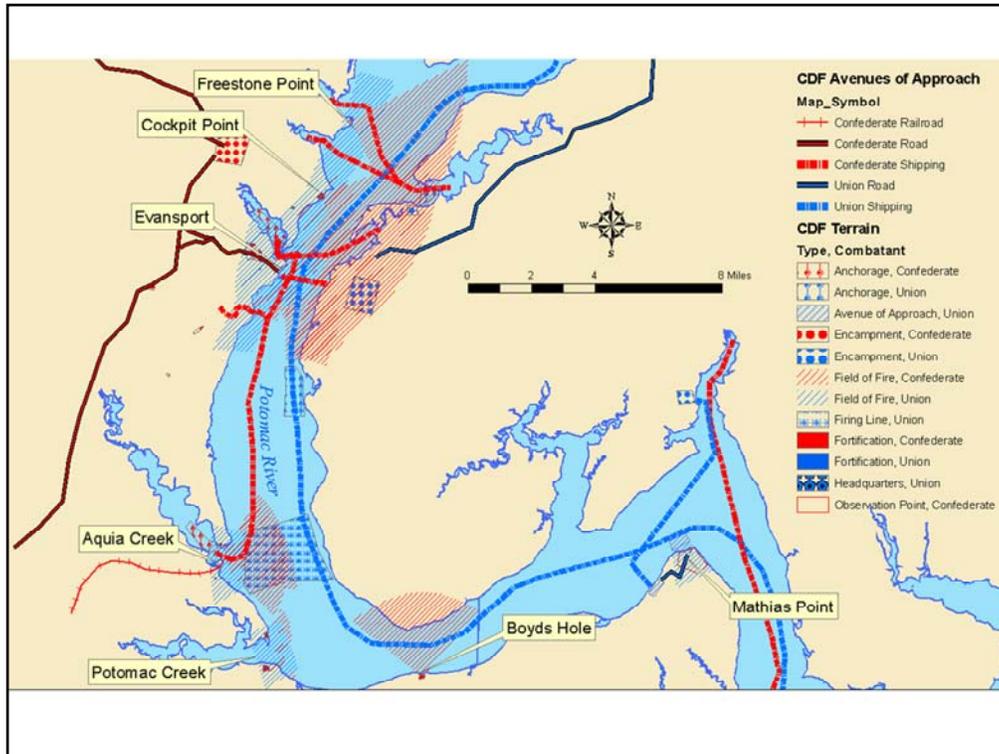


CHAIRMAN'S AWARD FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

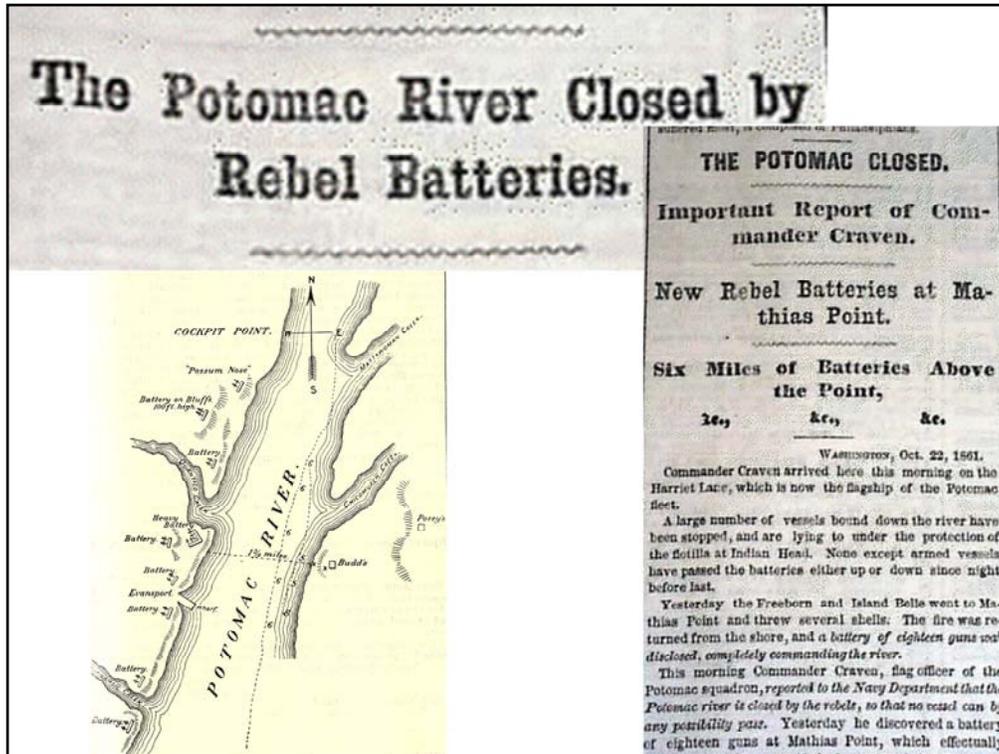
United States Marine Corps Base Quantico
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Institute of Maritime History
John Milner Associates, Inc.
National Environmental Education Foundation

Civil War Site Preservation
Quantico, Virginia



During the ten months from the outset of hostilities in Virginia in May 1861 until the Confederate withdrawal from northern Virginia in March 1862, a long series of skirmishes and artillery duels was fought along the Potomac River below Washington. The Union immediately used its naval power to halt all shipping and travel between Maryland and Virginia, and repress any Confederate strongholds. The Confederates held their ground in early battles and by October 1861 had established a chain of some 15 batteries along the river. The strongest of these blocked shipping to and from Washington for almost five months.

Camp French, Rising Hill Camp, and Tennessee Camp were built and occupied by Confederate forces very early in the Civil War. Near Evansport, today's Quantico, Virginia, these were bivouac areas for the southern military manning artillery batteries threatening shipping on the Potomac River, a principal transportation artery for the federal capital of Washington, D.C. They played key roles in what we will refer to as the Battle of the Potomac, actually a campaign to control navigation on the lower Potomac River during the early stage of the Civil War. Laid out in orderly military fashion, these bivouacs ranged from relatively primitive dugouts to fairly sophisticated cabins with glass windows and well-crafted doors.



This campaign has been brought to contemporary attention through the efforts of a partnership led by the U.S. Marine Corps at Marine Corps Base Quantico that has resulted in the successful listing of the three camp sites onto the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places, and the identification of other sites eligible for the National Register.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, for the reasons assigned in my Proclamation of the 19th instant, a blockade of the ports of the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas was ordered to be established;

And whereas, since that date, public property of the United States has been seized, the collection of the revenue obstructed, and duly commissioned officers of the United States, while engaged in executing the orders of their superiors, have been arrested and held in custody as prisoners, or have been impeded in the discharge of their official duties without due legal process, by persons claiming to act under authorities of the States of Virginia and North Carolina :

An efficient blockade of the ports of those States will also be established.

In witness whereof, I have hereto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

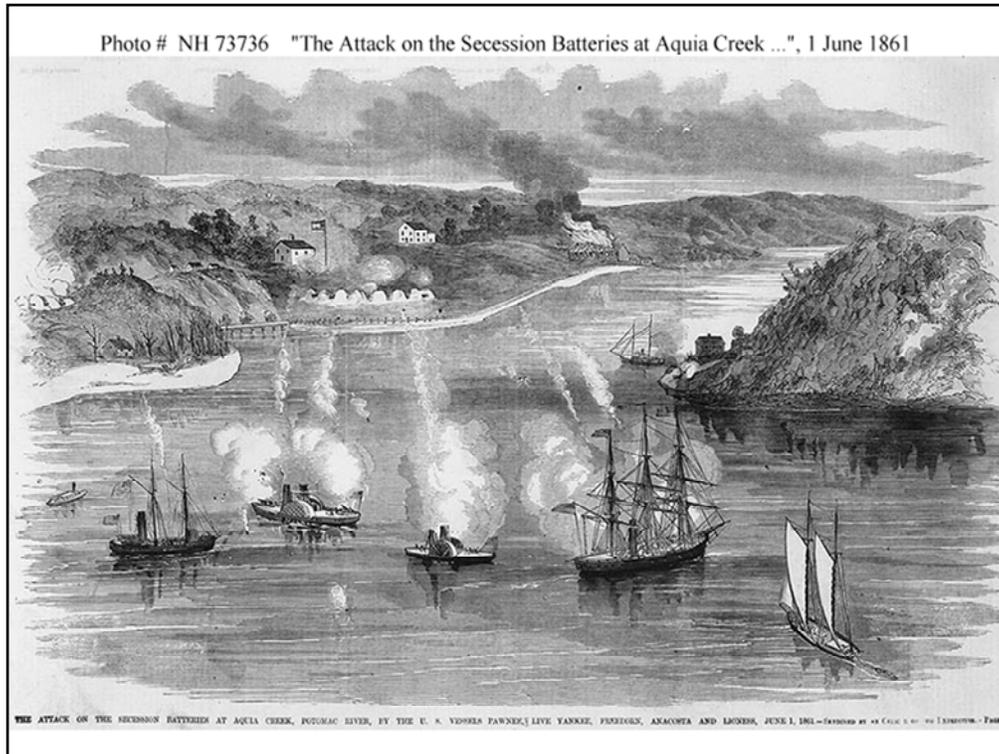
Done at the City of Washington, this twenty-seventh day of April, in the year of our Lord [L.S.] one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-fifth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

On April 12, 1861, Fort Sumter was shelled by secessionist forces. Five days later, Virginia seceded from the United States. On April 27, 1861, President Lincoln expanded the blockade of southern slave-owning states to include all ports in Virginia and North Carolina. Within two weeks, the Confederate Virginia Navy had armed an area around a wharf on Aquia Creek – a tributary of the Potomac River – that was later known as Youbedamned Landing.



On May 31, three U.S. gunboats attacked the wharf and Confederate batteries at Aquia Creek, the first heavy engagement of the campaign, and of the war in Virginia. Exchanges of gunfire between two sets of Confederate batteries on the shore and the gunboats, joined by the USS *Pawnee* on the second day, ensued. Amazingly, while there were injuries and significant damage, the only fatalities recorded were a horse and a chicken. After two days and considerable damage, Union ships withdrew. Confederate forces remained in control of the entrance to Aquia Creek until March 1862.

Confederate forces emplaced artillery at key points in an attempt to control shipping on the Potomac River, entrenching guns in the vicinity of present-day Quantico, that were large enough to considerably hinder shipping. This was a military and political embarrassment to the U.S. government, whose policy was to blockade the south but was suffering a blockade of Washington, D.C.

The subsequent campaign witnessed what are believed to be three firsts for the United States.

They were:

- the first Congressional Medal of Honor bestowed on a member of the Navy in the Civil War;
- the first recorded use of floating anti-ship mines in American warfare; and,
- the first use of an 'aircraft carrier.'

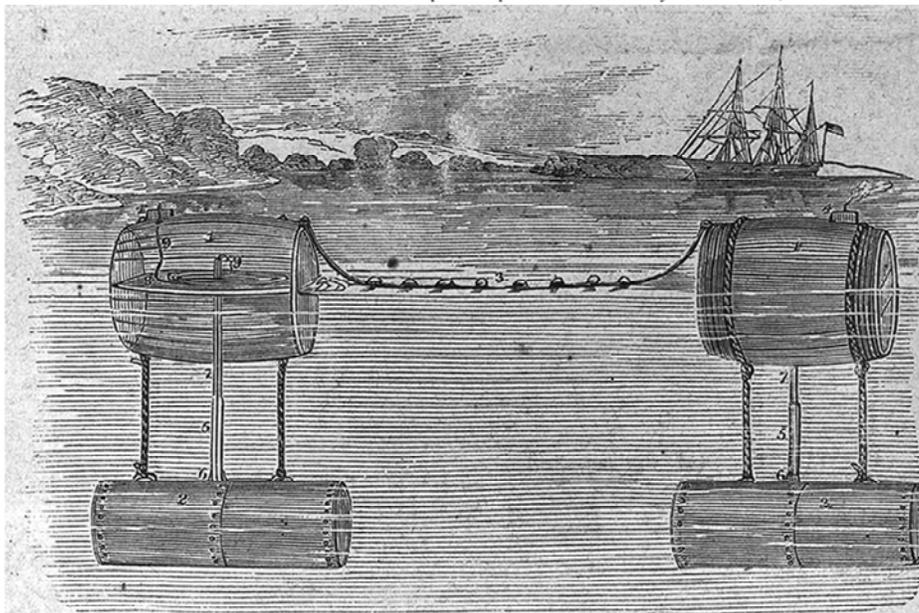
Photo # NH 60990 Sighting a gun on board USS Thomas Freeborn, 1861



Masters Mate John Williams, listed as “captain of the maintop,” was part of a landing party on June 27, 1861, that engaged in a fierce firefight during which Commander James H. Ward, Commandant of the Union Potomac flotilla, was fatally struck by a musket bullet while aboard his flagship *Thomas Freeborn* personally sighting cannon against enemy forces. Williams’s Medal of Honor citation reads:

“... Williams told his men, while lying off in the boat, that every man must die on his thwart sooner than leave a man behind. Although wounded by a musket ball in the thigh he retained the charge of his boat; and when the staff was shot away, held the stump in his hand, with the flag, until alongside the *Freeborn*.

Photo # NH 59384 Confederate mine "picked up on the Potomac" by USS Pawnee, 1861

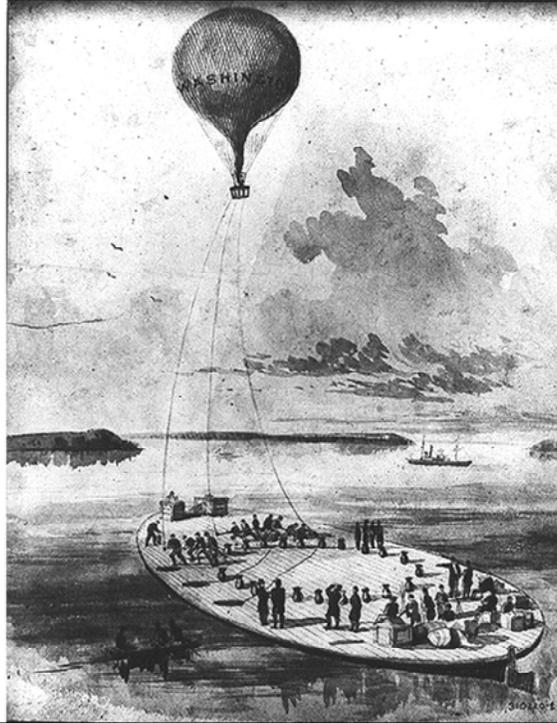


REFERENCES.—No. 1. Large oil-casks, serving as buoys.—2. Iron boiler or bomb, 4 feet 6 inches long, 18 inches in diameter.—3. Rope 3 inches, with large pieces of cork at a distance of every 2 feet.—4. Box on top of cask, with fusee.—5. Gutta-percha tube fitting in to copper pipe.—6. Brass tap on bomb.—7. Copper tube running through cask.—8. Wood on platform in centre of casks, in which fusee was coiled and secured.—9. Fusee.

INFERNAL MACHINE PICKED UP ON THE POTOMAC BY THE U. S. STEAMER "PAWNEE."

In July 1861, the USS *Pawnee* recovered two floating casks connected by a rope with mines slung beneath them, rigged to trigger fuses when impacted by a ship. It was floating in the Potomac off Aquia Creek. This is the first known such use of these "infernal devices" in U.S. history.

Professor Lowe Develops the First 'Aircraft Carrier'



In October 1861, the main Confederate offensive batteries at Shipping Point opened up, and halted shipping on the Potomac. This led to deployment of Hooker's Division across the river and the use of Professor Thaddeus S.C. Lowe's aerial observation balloons from a specially designed barge to scout the gun emplacements, the first known use of military aviation from a floating platform.

Executive Order - President's General War Order No. 3

March 8, 1862

Ordered, That no change of the base of operations of the Army of the Potomac shall be made without leaving in and about Washington such a force as in the opinion of the General in Chief and the commanders of all the army corps shall leave said city entirely secure.

That no more than two army corps (about 50,000 troops) of said Army of the Potomac shall be moved *en route* for a new base of operations until the navigation of the Potomac from Washington to the Chesapeake Bay shall be freed from enemy's batteries and other obstructions, or until the President shall hereafter give express permission.

That any movements as aforesaid *en route* for a new base of operations which may be ordered by the General in Chief, and which may be intended to move upon the Chesapeake Bay, shall begin to move upon the bay as early as the 18th day of March instant, and the General in Chief shall be responsible that it so move as early as that day.

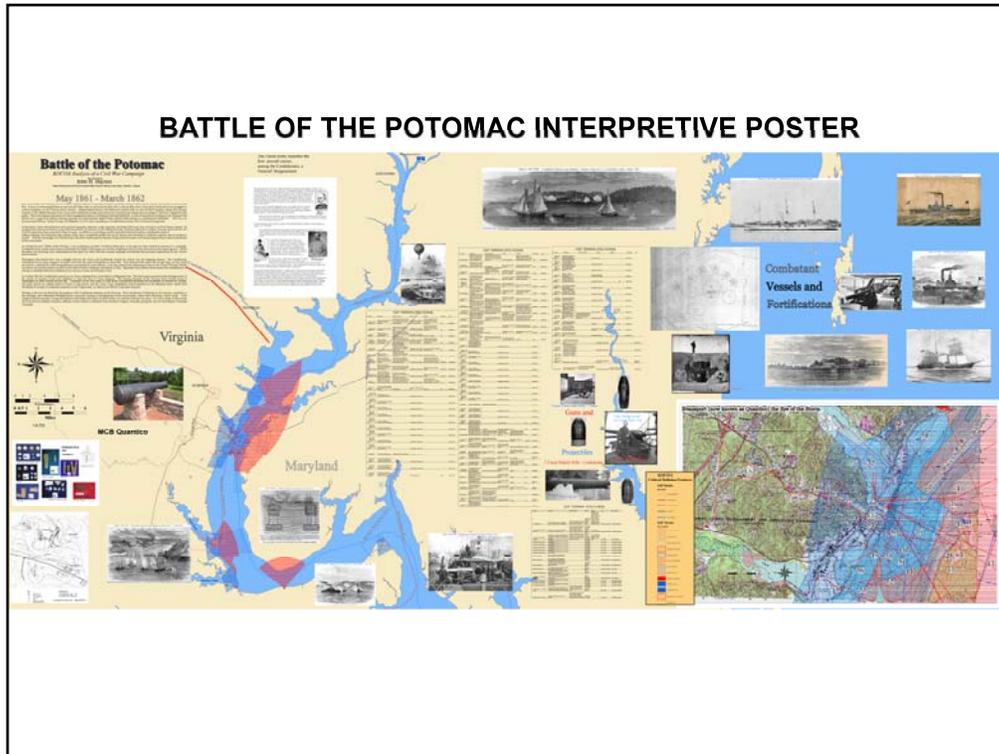
***Ordered*, That the Army and Navy cooperate in an immediate effort to capture the enemy's batteries upon the Potomac between Washington and the Chesapeake Bay.**

A. LINCOLN.

John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* (online), Santa Barbara, CA, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=69801>.

The issue posed by Confederate batteries at Quantico was sufficiently grave that Lincoln issued General War Order Number 3 on March 8, 1862, that instructed that a minimum of two army corps (50,000 men) be retained in Washington D.C. so long as the Confederate batteries remained in place, and ordered a combined Army and Navy attack on the batteries.

Ultimately, on March 9, 1862, Union forces discovered that the Confederate forces had been compelled to abandon the area by order of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who wanted to use the forces to better defend Richmond.



The locating of Quantico Marine Corps Base on such a historic site is a fortuitous coincidence. Quantico was established in October 1917 as a direct consequence of the First World War.

Camp French is the largest of the three sites now listed on the National Register at Quantico. It held four regimental sized cantonments. The units stationed there were the 35th Georgia Infantry, 22nd North Carolina Infantry, perhaps the First Maryland Artillery, and the fourth sector was home to brigade company-sized units and naval officers commanding batteries that fired large guns more commonly used by the Navy.

Immediately south of Camp French is Rising Hill Camp. It is associated with a battery placed on a nearby hill, and the old 32-pounder still near there that may well be original to the site. Rising Hill Camp was home to the 47th Virginia from Stafford County, a local unit.

Tennessee Camp – the farthest south of the three – is south of Chopawamsic Creek. It housed the Second Tennessee Volunteers who were mustered from across Tennessee, and therefore was a larger unit than most regiments, numbering 1,100 to 1,200 persons.

The efforts to find, research, interpret and preserve these sites, and list them on the National Register in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, are an exemplary effort by a federal agency in partnership with others. This includes continuing research on associated sites such as Shipping Point Battery #1, and the wreck of the CSS *George Page*, a Confederate gunboat sunk in Quantico Creek.

The work that was done prior to the nominations is too extensive to mention in depth, but three activities were key and relate directly to the partnership we are noting today.



Figure 17. Test unit excavation in progress, Shipping Point Battery 1, facing east.

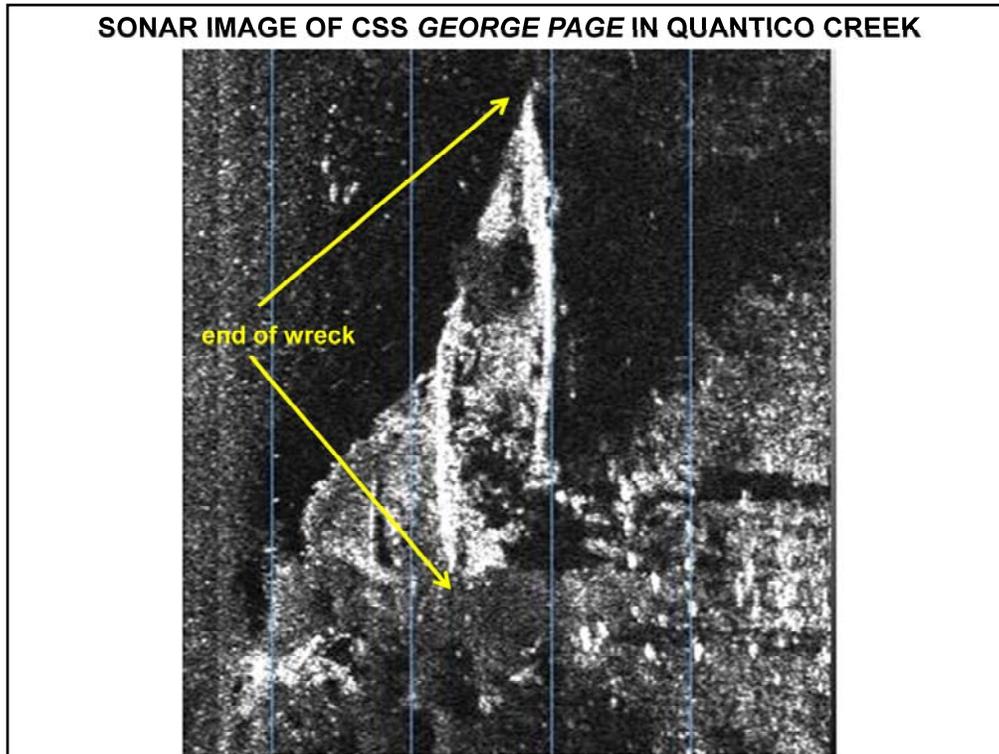
Archaeological testing was conducted at the Shipping Point battery sites. This area holds tremendous potential as an appropriate area where the story of the Battle of the Potomac can be interpreted for the public.



Erosion control measures were taken by volunteers at the Second Tennessee Camp in conjunction with a National Public Lands Day event largely accomplished through volunteer efforts.

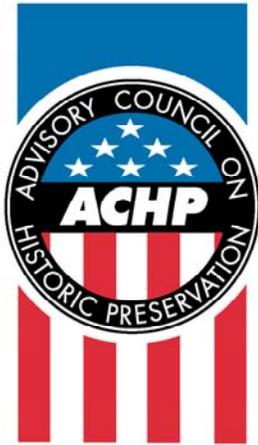


And an underwater survey was conducted of Quantico Creek, where documentary evidence records Confederate ships and related structures that were scuttled and submerged.



Work at Quantico continues, and there is little doubt that more evidence of an important episode in Civil War history will be brought to light.

Additional National Register nominations well may ensue, and more public interpretation of the sites are assured in an appropriate manner in the future. We look forward to learning more about the Battle of the Potomac and of the cultural resources in the care of Marine Corps Base Quantico.



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