

Perspectives in Military History

Broken Lives and Shattered Bones

Discovering a Field Hospital at Manassas Battlefield

Superintendent Brandon Bies

Manassas National Battlefield Park

Amid the stink of blood, the moans of wounded, and the detritus of battle, a Civil War battlefield surgeon, sawed through the shattered remnant of a Soldier's leg. As he tossed the removed appendage into the nearby pit of other discarded limbs, another victim of the Battle of Second Manassas was placed on his grizzly operating table. On Wednesday, October 16, 2019, at 7:15 PM, the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, will host Superintendent Brandon Bies of the Manassas National Battlefield Park to present a talk entitled "Broken Lives and Shattered Bones: Discovering a Field Hospital at Manassas Battlefield." Brandon Bies will discuss the 2015 excavation of a Civil War "Limb Pit" discovered on the grounds of the Second Battle of Bull Run. The archaeological find sheds new light on how battlefield surgery took place during the American Civil War.

At Manassas National Battlefield Park in 2014, archeologists monitoring a utility trench excavation observed bone fragments scattered across the soil. Park officials ordered further archaeological excavations in 2015, resulting in the discovery of the remains of a Union field hospital surgeon's pit dating to the Battle of Second Manassas. Archeologists recovered the nearly-complete remains of two Union soldiers, along with eleven amputated arms and legs. The unprecedented discovery is the first of its kind on a Civil War battlefield and has greatly expanded archeologists' understanding of the decisions made by surgeons on who could, and could not, be saved.

Superintendent Brandon Bies of the Manassas National Battlefield Park has managed the park since March 2017. Prior to this, he served as the legislative coordinator for the National Capital Region of the National Park Service. Bies was also the Site Manager of Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial, where he oversaw planning for a \$12.35M rehabilitation made possible by philanthropist David Rubenstein. Bies began his work in national parks as an archeologist at Monocacy National Battlefield, and was the Cultural Resources Specialist for the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Site Manager of Great Falls Park. He holds bachelor's degrees in American History and Anthropology and a master's degree in Applied Anthropology.

DATE: Wednesday, October 16, 2019

TIME: Doors open at 6:30 PM and the talk begins at 7:15 PM

PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multipurpose Room

For updates and any last-minute changes in "Perspectives" lectures, please check:

www.USAHEC.org, our Facebook Page, or call the Information Desk: 717-245-3972.