# Fields of Conflict

*Progress & prospect in Battlefield Archaeology*

## Abstract

**Guilford Courthouse: Changing Interpretations of the Battlefield.**
by Lawrence E. Babits
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Since the Battle of Guilford Courthouse was fought on 15 March 1781, interpreting the battle has taken two distinct turns. One, commencing in the late 19th century, related to the Guilford Battleground Company's purchase of land where the battle was fought. Because a key area of the landscape was prime agricultural land, not all the battlefield was purchased. Consequently, the battle's interpretation was compressed onto the land that was purchased. Since the Revolutionary War Bicentennial, additional research suggests the battle extended considerably further to the east. Systematic archaeological surveys tend to confirm this opinion and, since the additional land was purchased in the mid-twentieth century, the battle is now more accurately placed on a landscape that agrees with 1781 maps. Future research for sensitive areas and those slated for development is suggested.

**Uncovering the Discourses of Battle: First results of the Bloody Meadows Project**
by John and Patricia Carman
co-Directors, 'Bloody Meadows' Project and Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, UK

The Bloody Meadows Project takes an international and comparative perspective on landscapes of battle across time and space. Drawing in particular on an anthropologically-informed 'phenomenological' approach to landscapes -- as advocated by some post-processual archaeologists -- it has sought to identify what kinds of places have been sought in different periods of the past for the activity called 'battle'. Preliminary results reported at the first Fields of Conflict conference (2000) suggested that during particular periods of history particular kinds of landscape were recognised as the 'proper' places at which to fight and that these differed from period to period. Further work -- including further fieldwork -- now suggests that there are recognisable 'discourses of battle' peculiar to particular periods. There are also suggestions that the distinctions between battle and other forms of military activity (such as counter-insurgency operations, skirmish and siege) so often reflected in our own approaches to the management of the spaces where such activities took place, do not apply in other times. In other words, our own 21st century 'discourse of battle' is different from that of other periods and places: but this is not only a matter of technical military development.

**After the War and the Transformation of a Battlefield**
by Lynne R. Dore
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The growing interest in visiting battlefields highlights the significant value societies places on remembrance and that military heritage is important. Not only do battlefields function as places of commemoration and remembrance (Gough 2000); they also provide a range of visitor experiences. Many Governments have been responsive in their actions toward preserving such sites from both a nationalistic and economic perspective. The activities of the Australian Government have significantly raised the level of visitor interest in travel to overseas destinations.

This interest has seen a corresponding development of the landscape for commemorative and remembrance activities. The landscape is continually being modified with the creation of new memorial sites and upgrading of existing sites, whilst other landscape changes are driven by environmental necessity, aesthetic enhancement, visitor safety, or in some cases vandalism. Both the man-made and natural transformations of the landscape therefore modify the visitors' experience and perceptions of war and its impacts. This socially modified landscape encourages new approaches to preserving remembrance, facilitating pilgrimage and for engendering a

culture of peace. The manner in which some battlefield landscapes are transformed and complemented provides an opportunity to explore the motivating factors within the visitor experience.

This research project will examine the chronological transformation of the battlefield landscape, investigate differences in and between sites, assess the individual character of sites and their functional differences and explore how they are made familiar for tactical purposes. Whilst traditional methods of archaeological investigation have dealt primarily with the military tactics employed in battle; the range of armaments used and the creation of offensive and defensive structures for war; little attention has been given to the modification of the landscape over time, nor the role of government in creating that landscape. Such investigation can help to move the visitor experience beyond that of a cemetery tour.

This paper will outline the researcher's current research methodology for examining the transformation of a battlefield, the complementary attractions informing the visitor experience and what opportunities lie ahead for archaeology to further enhance that experience.

**Environmental implications of the underground war in Flanders, Belgium, 1914- 1918**
by Peter Doyle & Peter Barton
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Military mining is an ancient procedure that has often been used in the reduction of fortresses during siege warfare. During the Great War (1914-18) the Western Front that crossed western Europe was effectively a linear fortress. Military mining was employed by all protagonists and involved the construction of dugouts – underground shelters for housing men, as well as the construction of subways for movement of men and materiel, and mined tunnels for offensive action. All these excavations connected with trenches: open ditches up to 2 metres deep. So developed an underground war in which troops lived and worked, fought and died, and echo of its ancient past. As the armies left the field of battle at the end of the war, trenches were most often filled in upon the return to agriculture, but tunnels and dugouts, often with small entrances, were most often simply blocked off leaving open subterranean voids. This is a particular problem in Flanders, where tunnels and dugouts were cut through a range of weak sediments, usually supported by timber. Advancing age, and changes in depth to reach water saturated ground are some of the features that have led to incidences of structural damage as a result of subsidence. Given the complexity and extent of the dugout and gallery systems developed in Flanders, the presence of such open voids represents a significant geohazard. Four case studies in Flanders demonstrate the need for detailed surveys and hazard mapping in the region. Rich archives in Europe and elsewhere demonstrate that the construction of historical engineering maps as an aid to planning is feasible.

**Kalisch 1706: A battlefield investigation in Poland**
by Tomas Englund, SWE

During the Great Nordic War a battle was fought at Kalisch in Poland on October 29, 1706. An alliance of Polish, Russian and Saxon troops, numbering 40000, under the command of King August II and Prince Mensjikov, defeated a Swedish-Polish military alliance that was led by two commanders, the Swede Marderfelt and the Pole Potocki. After 4 hours of fighting the battle was over and 700 hundred soldiers had lost their lives. Several years ago Polish archaeologists began a survey of the battlefield. So far they have found musket bullets and coins, a mass grave lying beneath a mound that is still impressive today, and information concerning another burial. The location of the Swedish field camp has also been located. The battlefield is very well documented in the form of diaries and command lists (*ordres de bataille*). During 2002 the outlines for a Swedish-Polish project have been drawn up, consisting of preparation for the excavation of one of the graves and the continued survey of the field.

**English Battlefields: An Internet Resource from the Battlefields Trust**
by Glenn Foard
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The Battlefields Trust is preparing a national battlefields database for England and creating an educational resource for visitors, schools and 'lifelong learning' that will be delivered over the web through the Trust's website (http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/index.html ). This two-year project, beginning in June 2002, is funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is intended to deal with every battlefield on English Heritage's Battlefields Register and a small number of other sites which, as yet, have not been considered suitable for addition to the Register. This paper will present a brief background on the origins and objectives of the Trust

itself but will focus mainly on the current project. The project design will be discussed and the initial results will be considered. The project will be at a sufficiently early stage for discussion at the Conference to be taken into account during the implementation of the project.

**Recent work at the site of Balaclava, Crimea.**

by Phil Freeman
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The events of the Battle of Balaclava (25 Oct. 1854) in the Crimea War and in particular those central to 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' continue to be one of the most frequently discussed moments in British military history. However the archaeological potential of the site has not been explored and rarely appreciated. In recent months a rare opportunity to undertake a field survey at the site, combining satellite imagery, topographic survey and fieldwalking including a metal detector survey, has arisen. This work should be undertaken in July 2002. The focus of the survey will be exploration of one of the Redoubts on the Causeway Heights (tentatively identified as Redoubt No. 1, Canroberts' Hill) and occupied by Ottoman troops. It was the Russian assault on this fortification which precipitated the events culminating in the 'The Charge'.

The paper offered here will report on the results of the survey and will discuss its implications, both for future work at the location and for our understanding of the battle.

**Ålands lost costal fortifications from WW1 and WW2.**

by Kenneth Gustavsson
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It is widely known that Åland is a demilitarised and neutralised zone in the northern Baltic Sea. However, it is less well known that during the 1900s the islands have been significantly fortified in three different episodes. The location of Åland on the edge of different spheres of interest (Sweden/Russia, Finland/Sweden, Soviet/Germany) has meant that political and strategic changes within the Baltic Sea area have had a direct impact on the situation on Åland: the islands have been heavily fortified during war and, during periods of peace, equally heavily demilitarised.

The years 1915 to 1918 saw Åland as an important link in the Russian coastal defence chain, with around ten permanent coastal batteries, a number of radio and look-out stations, two seaplane stations and extensive field positions. During 1939 to 1940 Åland was an essential link in the Finnish coastal defensive chain and the protection of Finland's links to the West. Six permanent coastal batteries, lookout posts, field positions and field batteries were established. The years 1941 to 1944 saw the Finns repeating this scenario, with the establishment of seven coastal batteries that, this time, were constructed much stronger than before. Every time that fortifications were built it was planned that they should remain, even after hostilities. However, following the various peace treaties the international community has demanded their destruction and removal: this has happened in 1919, 1940 and 1944-45.

Extensive remains of these fortifications can still be seen in many locations in the landscape, both on the mainland of Åland and in the archipelago. Despite this, and because of the completely ruinous nature of what is left, the remains have been difficult to identify and long forgotten. During recent years a project has been initiated to on the one hand conduct archaeological surveys of the fortifications and identify the different objects, and on the other to research the military history of fortified Åland and its strategic role in the Baltic Sea region as a whole.

This paper will give an overview of Åland's coastal fortifications of the 1900s, with illustrations of the various batteries in action during wartime and what they look like today, following demolition.

**The Archaeology of Ambush: Examples from the Indian Wars of North America**

by Charles M. Haecker
Archaeologist, National Park Service, USA

Ambush, simply the logical extension of hunting wild game, is an ancient method of conducting warfare. Through careful selection of terrain and placement of manpower, a relative few can entrap and destroy a numerically superior foe. Once the trap is sprung, the actual fighting might last only a few minutes. The attackers, if successful, suffer little or no losses, whereas their enemy might be killed to the last man. Yet given

its time-honored effectiveness, ambush holds an unsavory place in Western Military tradition, wherein attacking an enemy heads-on than from the rear, enhances a professional soldier's career more. Aboriginal warriors, however, did not suffer from this conceit: For them, ambush was simply the most efficacious tactic when warring against a technologically superior enemy. The various Indian wars fought in North America during the 16th-19th centuries provide numerous historic accounts of ambush, yet rarely are the places of ambush archaeologically documented. This paper details the archaeological evidence of ambush at several places in the desert regions of North America. This is the homeland of the Apache Indians, who excelled in this type of warfare.

**Battlefield Archaeology of Dybbøl, Denmark.**
by Hans-Ole Hansen
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Necessitated by the actual reconstruction of a large part of a Danish redoubt of Dybbøl type 1861, a number of facts have been researched either in available archive sources or in the present landscape of the 1864 battlefield of Dybbøl, now under conservation regulations. The actual conflict concerning the Dybbøl fortifications took place between Danes and Prussians on February 1 and June 27 1864, in the south-east of Jutland on, and around the hills of Dybbøl Banke. Substantial source material will be studied. Maps, texts and photos have been the spin-off of the immense interest in the Battle of Dybbøl, April 18, 1864.

A detailed ground survey is essential. Beside the many visible traces, there are traces known but at this moment invisible, and yet more that need to be precisely located, such as the Prussian system of siege-trenches. Archaeological research and excavations has been focused on Danish trenches close to the Historical Centre and, in the early 1950s, the foundations of the "roller-bridge" of Redoubt No. 6 in the Dybbøl fortification. The finds from a well in Redoubt No. 2, consisting of a number of weapons, which were thrown down during the last minutes of the battle of the 18th, are stored at the regional museum of Sønderborg Slot. What has been studied from historical maps etc. are military communication roads, the Prussian observation posts and telegraph lines, the position of the so-called Broager batteries, established by the Prussians during the siege, the Prussian training sites, where troops were prepared for the general assault, and underwater finds of ammunition and the remains of what are probably wrecked gunboats.

Small pieces of timber from the Danish redoubts, mainly blockhouse material, have been found in surrounding farms. The intensive information and education programme within the Battlefield Center of Dybbøl needs to be added to by continued research, not least in the landscape. The historical landscape, with its once numerous hedgerows and pollard groves etc., will be a focus of the landscape studies, as many elements of the ancient farming landscape played a role during the fighting.

**"Siikajoki 1809: Geophysical survey of a Finnish battlefield"**
by Esa Hilli, Juho-antti Junno & Teemu Kokko, FIN

This paper will present findings from the battlefield of Siikajoki, 1809, War of Finland. The main aim of this project was to discover if the existence of the battlefield could be demonstrated using surveying methods (especially metal detectors), considering that it is located today in an area used for intensive agriculture and housing.

**Polish Coastal Artillery in the Pre-War Assessments of the German Intelligence Service**
by Antoni Komorowski & Krzysztof Kubiak
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Poland became an independent country in 1918 and at the same time the Polish Navy was established. During the early period the Polish Navy did not have enough financial resources to build a system of coastal defence. This is why the first battery of coastal artillery was finished and ready for action in 1929 - 1930. The battery was situated in Gdynia – Oksywie and consisted of two 100 mm Canet guns. Its fire covered the approaches to the port and naval base. Later the Polish coastal artillery was strengthened. Two batteries of 105 mm guns were added. They were equipped with four field guns but the Navy prepared concrete bunkers and munitions shelters for each gun. Later Poles built the first modern battery, which consisted of four 152,4 mm Bofors guns. The Polish coastal artillery was - from the time when they had started to build the first position - in the German Intelligence Service's centre of attention. German intelligence continuously tried to recognise where the batteries were situated and the armament of each battery. Most of this information came from networks of spies and data from aerial photos. This paper presents German intelligence's opinions concerning Polish coastal artillery during

various periods and compares these reports with the situation on the ground. The background of the main thought of the article is created by the brief history of the Polish Navy between 1918 and 1939.

**Frankensteins Monster: The value and danger for archaeology of re-animating the medieval warrior**
by David Lindholm, SWE

The problems of battlefield archaeology are very much the same regardless of the era being studied, but my suggested approach is perhaps most suited for the early to late medieval times in Europe and the Latin east. In order to understand the field of battle we must understand the participants. The focus has primarily been on strategy and political motives, but we need to "profile" the individual warrior, his person, equipment and performance on the field of battle. This is important since it will give us insight in what we can expect to find, and give many invaluable clues to interpreting the material including the geophysical site as such. The reconstruction must be scientific and above all, practically oriented in all aspects. This includes in depth study of protective equipment, weaponry, social distinctions and how this is expressed in the material, the use of weaponry and the overall application of the above on the actual field of battle. I have myself conducted a small-scale test of mid-15th century armour and weaponry to investigate the said questions. As a last point this knowledge gained will also help tremendously in developing methods for fieldwork and the preservation of the material.

**Managing Battlefields: Problem solving at Bomarsund**
by Viveka Löndahl
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The Russian fortress of Bomarsund, on the Åland Islands, is experiencing a renewed wave of interest as we approach 2004, the 150th anniversary of the fortress's destruction by an Anglo/French force during the Crimean War. Preservation of the designated ancient monument area has not been without its problems.

The issues connected to heritage management at Bomarsund revolve around the questions of public access and long-term management. Developments within the area (buildings, communication system, water and sewerage) represent a constant challenge to the diplomacy of compromise. On the other hand, erosion caused by natural and human actions, neglect (both as a physical entity and as an historical entity) and vandalism pose a real threat to the long-term preservation of the remains. An important goal of this project is to break down the barriers that exist between academia and the public, building on examples from the USA, where public involvement in fieldwork and through effective publications allows people to become engaged, creating a platform for the broader understanding and better preservation of the area.

The recognition and status of historical remains of military character differ from country to country and are often dependent on the way in which the specific remains are viewed in relation to the creation of the country's identity. Battlefields can be places of high emotion, linking living generations with a past that can encapsulate hardship, injustice and the sacrifice of human life, as well as the equally charged emotions of victory or defeat. Here, on the demilitarised Åland Islands, such issues assume a high profile. However, by showing that Bomarsund is a place of relevance to modern Ålanders and visitors to Åland, by revealing how this phenomenon has influenced the course of history, it is hoped that Bomarsund will be recognised as a significant cornerstone in the creation of Åland's identity and as a significant, international visitor destination.

**Bomarsund 1856 to 2006: The consequences for Åland**
by Elisabeth Nauclér,
Director of the Administration, The Goverment of the Åland Islands, ÅL

**The Log City of Valley Forge: The organization of America's Revolutionary Army**
by David Orr, Julia Steele and Douglas Campana
U.S. National Park Service, USA

Recent excavations in a remarkably well preserved area of Valley Forge National Park where the American Continental Army encamped during the critical winter of 1777-78 after the disastrous campaign that resulted in the loss of Philadelphia to the British have revealed much new evidence on how the army organized its day to day existence and on the importance of captured British supplies to the hard-pressed American forces. Our research design succeeded in uncovering, for the first time, the full range of activities within a brigade encampment from the forward defensive entrenchments, through the enlisted mens' and officers' hut areas, to the support areas in the rear. Previously unstudied features such as hardened roadways, camp kitchens and

outdoor processing areas are explored, as are their relationships to earthworks and living areas, to broaden our knowledge of the functional and social layout of a camp. There are many instances where structures and activities were done "by the book" and many others where exigencies and/or idiosyncrasies prevailed. Reuse of British uniforms and arms is apparent.

**Communicating Battlefields: Bomarsund as theatre**
by Graham Robins
Project Leader, Åland Board of Antiquities, ÅL

This paper will consider the use of archaeological techniques in the research and communication of battlefields, and questions concerning the principles and ethics of communicating events that represent extremes of human experience.

In August 1854 the Russian fortifications at Bomarsund became a theatre of battle. The successful communication of these events to the visiting public will depend on the ability to understand and present a detailed and multifaceted account that places Bomarsund within the full context of the period. Archaeologically, this means revealing through field survey techniques the historical landscape as the physical theatre of the historical events, and through the invaluable tool of excavation to bring to light the material details of past environments and events that can help visitors to relate to distant times. Above all else it is necessary that archaeology be integrated within the broadest possible research strategy.

The principles and ethics of communicating history are revealed in stark relief in the case of historical battlefields because of the intensity of the original experience and the complicated and varied ways in which modern visitors can perceive the place. Bomarsund is a perfect example of this complexity – it is an historical battlefield within a demilitarised region. This means that Bomarsund can be seen as the antithesis of modern Åland's identity. Ironically, Åland was demilitarised in 1856 as a direct result of the events at Bomarsund, 1854.

**The Use of GPS for Artefact Location and its Application in Battlefield Archaeology**
by Simon Richardsson & Tim Sutherland, UK

**Locating the Dead: The Towton Battlefield Archaeological Survey**
by Tim Sutherland, UK

In 1997, following the excavation of a mass grave of soldiers from the Battle of Towton, a multidisciplinary archaeological research project was instigated to analyse the physical evidence of the battle itself.

The results highlight that even though there is abundant evidence for the location of the conflict in the form of artefact scatters, the same cannot be said for evidence of the dead. The systematic archaeological survey of the medieval battlefield, over all of the relevant sites of mass graves as highlighted on the Register of Historic Battlefields, has identified that these have been misinterpreted. Negative evidence of mass graves from the battlefield itself suggests that the pre-conquest and early post-conquest practice of leaving most of the dead unburied in the field may have quietly continued until much later than is currently recognised. This does not fit with the documented description of an organised group of individuals burying the dead.

The personal artefacts recovered from the battlefield could therefore not just be items lost during the conflict, but also mark the locations of dead individuals.

It is therefore suggested that the mass grave at Towton, 2km from the site of the initial part of the conflict, was the result of clearance of bodies from the actual village after the rout following the battle.

With possible similarities to modern sites of indiscriminate slaughter such as the infamous killing fields of Cambodia where bodies were left to rot in the open, the reported location of the medieval battlefield may be reliable because, as a result of its post-battle devastation, it was impossible to forget.

**A Massgrave from the Battle of Good Friday in 1520, Uppsala, Sweden**

by Bernt Syse,
Vice Director, County Museum of Uppland, SWE

On 6th of April 1520 a battle was fought between the troops of the Danish King, Kristian II, and Swedish soldiers who had unfortunately lost their king a few months earlier. This battle, which is more or less forgotten by the history books, took place in and around the town centre of Uppsala, Sweden. After 481 years of obscurity, a mass grave was accidentally discovered in May 2001. This mass grave, or rather an area with a number of smaller pits, lies in the centre of Uppsala, just below the castle. After the discovery, a smaller area was investigated (about 7 $m^2$), and the result shows remains of people who died a painful death on the battlefield. According to the area and the result of the archaeological investigations it seems that many hundreds, maybe thousands of people can have been buried in this place. The investigations of the skeletal material have just started and the limited results so far suggest injuries typical for war of this period. Cut marks made by swords against the head are the most common injuries noted but other injuries also appear.

**The Baltic at War: History posing questions to archaeology**

by Samuil V. Tirkeltaub
Council of Veterans of the Hanko Naval Base, RUS

Interdependence of history and archaeology is illustrated with several examples from Baltic history between 1700 and 1855, through which historians may pose some questions and problems to archaeologists.

The Great Northern war of 1700 – 1721: What was the true location of the so called Rilax (or Hangö-udd) battle of July 27, 1714? Are there traces of 89 Russian galleys staying at Åland until the Autumn of 1714? Where on Eckerö did the Russian Council of War hold its meetings on July 29, 1716? Peace negotiations at Lövö on Vårdö. Remains of the two Swedish frigates which went aground near Flisöberg on July 27, 1720.

The Russian-Swedish war of 1788-1790: Search for remains of over 90 Russian and Swedish vessels which were lost in the two battles at Ruotsinsalmi, August 13, 1789 and June 28, 1790 (the similar traces of battles in Vyborg Bay have been thoroughly examined by Russian marine archaeologists).

The Russian-Swedish war of 1808-1809: Search for remnants of over 60 vessels which were burned and sunk at the surrender of Åbo, as well as for the sunk weaponry and ammunition and for the ruined installations of the Åbo-Stockholm optical telegraph link. Where were Gustav IV's headquarters on Åland located? Battles for Åland in March 1809 between the Russians and the Swedes: equipment, weapons, supply vehicles which were abandoned on ice of the Åland Sea between Signilsskär and Grisslehamn.

The Crimean war of 1854-1855 in the Baltic: Creation and defence of the fortress at Bomarsund. A report on its siege. The fate of the towers C, U and Z.