



Remains of Civil War Soldiers and Field Hospital Discovered

Significance

- The National Park Service discovered the remains of two Civil War soldiers and a battlefield surgeon's limb pit at Manassas National Battlefield Park.
- This is the first time that a surgeon's pit at a Civil War battlefield has been excavated and studied, and the first time that killed-in-action Civil War soldiers have been found buried with amputated limbs.

Discovery

- In 2014, the National Park Service conducted an archeological survey prior to digging a trench for a utility project. No significant finds were identified.
- During construction, the archeologist monitoring the project observed bone fragments in the soils and ensured that no further disturbance occurred.
- Scientists at the forensic anthropology lab at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History determined the bones were human and likely from the Civil War.
- When assembled, the fragments revealed the end of one bone had been sawed off. This was an important discovery, which prompted additional research.
- Archeological excavations were performed in October 2015, finding 11 amputated limbs and two nearly complete skeletons.

Research

- After the discovery, forensic anthropologists at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History sorted and reassembled bones, scanned them with medical imaging equipment, and conducted forensic analysis.
- Archeological evidence including uniform buttons and bullets, forensic analysis, and location of the site all suggest that the soldiers were wounded during the Battle of Second Manassas, likely on its final day, August 30 1862.
- Isotope analysis paired with archeological evidence indicate the men were Union soldiers from the Northeastern United States.
- One soldier was a Caucasian man, 25-29 years old. He died as a result of an .577 caliber Enfield bullet breaking his upper femur likely damaging his femoral artery; the bullet lodged sideways in the bone, possibly because it slowed and rotated as it passed through the soldier's cartridge box.
- The second soldier was 30-34 years old when he died as a result of injuries from one or more "buck and ball" rounds striking his shoulder, groin, and lower right leg.

Burial

- The two soldiers will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery in late summer 2018 in coffins constructed from a downed tree from the battlefield.
- They will be the first burials in the Millennium Expansion of Arlington National Cemetery.