

Doswell, Virginia

Lew Brodsky #2585



It's springtime, and as the weather gets increasingly warmer we get ever closer to the International Rally in Doswell. To help you plan your agenda for the time you will spend in Virginia in July, this is the fifth in a series of six articles about places of significance you may want to visit.

In each of these Blue Beret articles, we examine places of significance when driving in a specific direction from Doswell. Thus far we described places to the west, southeast, and northeast, as well as attractions very close to Doswell. We've mentioned that some of these places, like the National Museum of the Marine Corps (see the April issue of Blue Beret) can be done as a "day trip." But we've also cautioned that major Virginia tourist attractions, like Williamsburg and the Historic Colonial Triangle area (see the March issue) take several days to experience fully.

In this month's article, we look at a few points of interest SOUTH of our rally site. Admittedly, they get fewer visitors than Virginia's bigger and better-known attractions, but they are interesting, less crowded and historically significant. Any of them can easily be seen in a day trip from Doswell. And, because they are close to each other and less than an hour away, you might even have time to visit two or three in a single trip.

Richmond, Virginia's capital, is only 25 miles south and it's worth a full day. We described highlights of this city in the November 2018 Blue Beret, but to explore what Richmond offers, it's best to start at the Visitor Center. Get a map, talk to a representative at the desk and plan your stops.

On the way toward Richmond, you will pass Virginia's one and only Airstream dealership. "Airstream of Virginia" has a new location just off I-95 Exit 89 near Ashland. As you drive south for eight miles, you'll see a whole bunch of familiar-looking silver trailers (and many SOB RVs) parked in a huge lot off the edge of the Interstate at mile marker 90.0. The dealership is operated by Camping World and located alongside their larger McGeorge's Rolling Hills RV facility. It offers RV service and has an accessories store.



Henricus Hospital replica

Near Richmond, the old and the new stand side-by-side. A 21st Century Dominion Electric power plant is adjacent to a 17th Century historic site on the James River. The "Citie of Henricus at Dutch Gap," was the second English

settlement in America founded in 1611, four years after Jamestown. Henricus is where the famous princess of the Powhatan tribe we know as "Pocahontas" converted to Christianity and lived with her English husband, tobacco planter John Rolfe. On the piece of land believed to be the original site of Henricus, Chesterfield County now operates a living history museum employing a staff of 17 interpreters in period dress. Visitors are greeted in replica buildings of the 17th Century; including a settler's home with chickens, hogs and goats; a replica of the first hospital in English America; a parsonage; a church/meeting hall; and an Indian village. Everything here is on a much smaller scale than the "Jamestown Settlement" tourist attraction, 50 miles downstream, but fewer visitors means more time to spend with the interpreters to learn about 17th Century life in America.

Drive a little further south to Petersburg and you fast forward in time more than 250 years. Petersburg was of pivotal importance in the middle of the 19th Century. It was where the closing eastern battles of the Civil War were fought. Just



Sculpture at Civil War Soldier Museum

off I-85 southwest of the city is Pamplin Historic Park, which includes the award-winning National Museum of the Civil War Soldier. Here you learn a lot about the bloodiest war in American history from the perspective of those who did the fighting, Union and Confederate. The museum's displays, artifacts, interactive audio programs and videos purposefully de-emphasize leaders and politics, focusing instead on the war's impact on the life of the common soldier. Also at Pamplin is the site where, on April 2, 1865, the 5th Vermont Infantry broke through the Confederate defenses surrounding Petersburg, hastening Robert E. Lee's retreat and inevitable surrender at Appomattox seven days later.



Tudor Hall Plantation at Pamplin Park

On the east side of the city is the Petersburg National Battlefield, maintained by the National Park Service. An 18-minute video and a driving tour explain General Ulysses S. Grant's siege of the city between

continued on page 29

Volunteers Needed! **These Committees need help in Doswell:**

Band - Greg Heuer gheuer@umich.edu

Carpentry - Fred Kiehl fred@kiehlbuilding.com

Choir - Bob Hawkins rehawkpe@maxxsouth.net

Club Store - Leslie Martin ljjamartin@yahoo.com

Member Services - Judy Shelley judyfshelley@gmail.com

Mentors for Group Driving Tours - Ann Newman 27anewman@gmail.com

Pet Show - Lilli Hamnqvist lilli@hamnqvist.org

Presentations/Roundtables - Victoria Magnacca doswellpresentations@wbcci.net

If you are willing to volunteer, please contact the chair by email.

Doswell, Virginia

continued from page 27

June 1864 and April 1865. Grant knew that capturing Petersburg would cut off supplies to Richmond and strangle the Confederacy. During a nine-month siege, many battles were fought along the city's perimeter, resulting in over 70,000 casualties. In one early battle, Union troops from Pennsylvania used their expertise as coal miners to dig a 511-foot-long tunnel under a Confederate strongpoint and then detonated explosives in what was described at the time as the "largest, loudest boom in the history of the world." Visitors can view the site to learn what happened after the explosion in what became known as the "Battle of the Crater."



Women's Museum Exterior

Returning to this century, two small museums which showcase aspects of today's Army are at nearby Fort Lee. You can visit the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum and the U.S. Army Women's Museum. They are located next

to each other on this Army base.

We have described these Virginia destinations south of Doswell as "day trips;" but there is also good camping in the Petersburg area for longer stays, or as an overnight stop on the way to the International Rally. A favorite of Virginia's Airstreamers is Pocahontas State Park, which has a well-maintained public campground with water/electric sites.



Civil War Soldier Museum diorama

The next issue of Blue Beret will feature the final article in this series. We take an in-depth look at Northern Virginia, a bustling metropolis about 70 miles due north of Doswell via Interstate 95. The land between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers was once the colonial stomping grounds (and home) of George Washington. Today, Northern Virginia (often abbreviated "NoVa" or "NORVA") serves as a government, business and residential extension of the Nation's Capital. NoVa and metropolitan Washington D.C. is a "must see," especially if you are visiting Virginia for the first time.



Virginia Points of Interest Driving SOUTH from The Meadow Event Park	# miles from Doswell (Est. driving time)	Website	GPS Coordinates
Airstream of Virginia Camping World & McGeorge's RV 11525 Sunshade Lane Ashland, VA 23005 804-550-7323	11.9 (south) (13 min.) via I-95 Exit 89	www.airstreamofva.com	37.72282N -77.45325W
City of Richmond - Virginia's State Capital Visitor Center 405 N. 3rd St, Richmond, VA 23219	25.3 (south) (24 min.) via I-95 Exit 75 & N. 3 rd Street	www.visitrichmondva.com	37.54570N -77.43756W
U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum 1201 22 nd Street Fort Lee, VA 23801 804-734-4203 (Co-located with Army Women's Museum)	52.2 (south) (48 min.) via I-95 Exit 54 & SR144 east Enter main gate (Sisisky Blvd.)	www.qmmuseum.lee.army.mil	37.24220N -77.34622W
U.S. Army Women's Museum 2100 Adams Avenue Fort Lee, VA 23801 804-734-4327 (Co-located with the Army Quartermaster Museum)	52.2 (south) (48 min.) via I-95 Exit 54 & SR144 east Enter main gate (Sisisky Blvd.)	www.awm.lee.army.mil	37.24220N -77.34622W
Petersburg National Battlefield Visitors Center 5001 Siege Road Prince George, VA 23875 804-732-3531	50.2 (south) (48 min.) via I-95 Exit 52 U.S. 460/301	www.nps.gov/pete/index.htm	37.24317N -77.23875W Visitor Center
Henricus Historical Park (1611 A.D.) 251 Henricus Point Road Chester, VA 23836 804-748-1611	44.3 (south) (46 min.) via I-95 Exit 61A SR10 east, SR732 & 615	www.henricus.org	37.37416N -77.36576W
Pamplin Historical Park & The National Museum of the Civil War Soldier 6125 Boydton Plank Road Petersburg, VA 23803 804-861-2820	55.5 (south) (53 min.) via I-95, I-85 Exit 63A, & U.S.1 south	www.pamplinpark.org	37.18841N -77.47775W
Pocahontas State Park (camping) 10301 State Park Road Chesterfield, VA 23832 804-796-4255 Electric/Water/Dump station	44.0 (south) (54.9 min.) via I-95 Exit 62, SR288, SR10, & SR655	www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/pocahontas	37.36952N -77.56047W Park entrance ranger booth