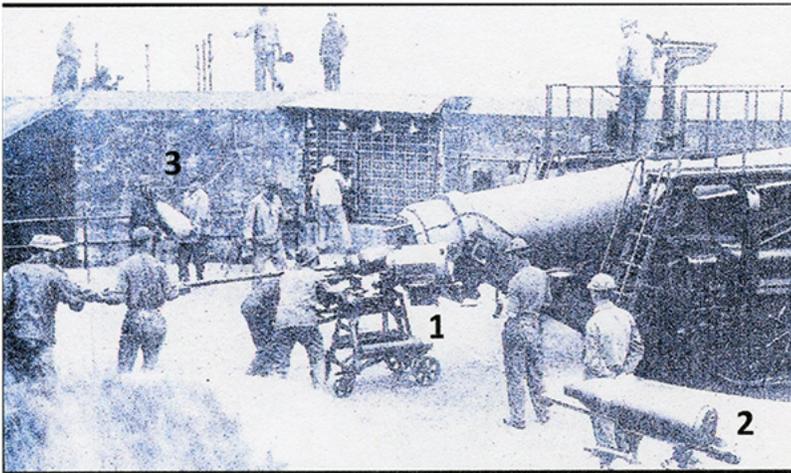




PRESERVING THE PAST  
INSPIRING THE FUTURE  
Tenth Edition Newsletter

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NEW EXHIBIT A WORKING REPRODUCTION



## AMMUNITION CART

Each gun in Battery Jesup was equipped with three ammunition carts. The function of the carts was to move the ammunition from the ammunition hoist delivery table at the top of the ammunition hoist to the breech of the gun on the loading platform.

This is a reproduction made locally by Pender Brothers, Inc. of Port Royal.

The cart had a projectile tray on the top and two trays on either side for the two powder bags. The projectile tray could be adjusted so it exactly matched the height of the gun's breech and the gun angle in the loading position. The extension on the front of the projectile tray covered the threads on the inside of the breech so they would not be damaged by the projectile sliding over them when it was rammed home into the breech.

To speed up the loading process, later the ammunition hoist only handled the heavy projectiles and the powder bags were carried up from the magazine manually. After the projectile was rammed home, the two powder bags were loaded together from a stretcher handled by four cannoneers.

1. Projectile on a cart being loaded.
2. Projectile waiting on a cart.
3. Two powder bags on a stretcher waiting to be loaded next.

## Harvest Festival Nov 2025

Over 300 people attended. A highlight of the Festival was the presence of Buffalo Soldiers and Rough Rider reenactors who organized a group of young “volunteers” to simulate the charge up San Juan Heights. It was a joy to see the kids get involved in and excited about history.



Teddy Roosevelt & Buffalo Soldiers



Buffalo Soldiers & Sara Green



Kids Capture Spanish Flag



Hat Decorating



At the Pavillion

**SPONSORS:** Merrill Lynch-The Clark Troutman Group; Alpha Graphics; J.H. Hiers Construction; Pender Brothers; Garrett Dry Cleaning; Coastal Expeditions; Gay Fish Company; Palmette State Bank; REMAX

**CAPTAIN JAMES FORNANCE (1850 – 1898)**

Fort Fremont's Battery Fornance was named in honor of Cpt. James Fornance who died from wounds at the battle at San Juan Hill, Cuba. Captain Fornance's story is one of quiet valor—no medals, no fame, no grand monuments, but a life lived with integrity, sacrifice and devotion.

James Fornance was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania on July 30, 1850. His father, Joseph Fornance, was a native of Pennsylvania and a member of the state and US House of Representatives. His mother, Anne McKnight, was a member of one of the oldest families in Virginia. On September 1, 1867 James Fornance was appointed to the US Military Academy at West Point (USMA), graduated in June 2, 1871, and assigned to the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant. A year later he made 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant and became regimental adjutant. Serving in frontier duty at Fort Bridger, Wyoming and in Nebraska through 1874, he participated in the Red Cloud Agency and Sioux expedition. For the next ten years, he served in Louisiana, Georgia, and Alabama during Reconstruction. In 1876, Fornance married a Miss Fannie Barbee of Baton Rouge. In 1877 he served in Kentucky and Pennsylvania to suppress the railroad riots and then returned to Louisiana. Between 1877 and 1881, the couple lost three infant children from childbirth or illness. In 1884, he was stationed at Fort Wingate in Gallup, NM and then at Fort Marcy, Santa Fe where he was promoted to captain. In 1886, his fourth and last child, Ione B. Fornance was born. After a recruiting tour in 1889, Fornance was ordered to Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, KS where he served as an instructor. Returning to frontier duty, he served as Adjutant of the District of NM. In 1894, Fornance transferred to Fort Columbus, Governor's Island, NY to serve as the Senior Captain with the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry. His wife Fannie died shortly after arriving. In a prelude to coming events, Fornance witnessed the testing of a new type of bullet proof armor and expressed great interest in its potential. But he was noncommittal and made the eerie comment: It seems to stop a bullet but I don't know what I would do with it in my business, I could not carry it around with me.

Fornance participated in the testing of a new type of marching ration called "kola" a caffeine-rich seed from the Cola tree. Fornance suffered from malaria and on the advisement of a surgeon, travelled to a sanitarium for treatment. When hostilities with Spain broke, Fornance hurried back to his command at Fort Columbus. Refusing to retire or seek easier assignments, he accompanied his unit to Port Tampa, Florida to prepare for deployment with General William R. Shafter. Fornance was again urged to remain behind due to his deteriorating health. He boarded the transport ship *Saratoga* and steamed for Cuba. With 16,000 soldiers, Fornance landed at the small village of Daiquirí on June 22, 1898. Fornance was again urged to take a staff appointment. On July 1, the troops marched through a nearly impenetrable thicket and emerged on the San Juan River. Here, at the foot of San Juan Hill, they were exposed to Spanish artillery and hidden sharpshooters. Unsupported by the same, the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry were forced to attack the enemy entrenchments. While leading Company F up the heavily fortified hill, Fornance was wounded in a leg and urged by superiors to move to the rear. Instead, with the help of his sergeant, he was bandaged and retook command. Soon afterwards and partly up the hill, a second bullet pierced his abdomen and exited near his spine. Three of his soldiers stopped to render aid but Fornance ordered them on. Soldiers of "The Fighting 13<sup>th</sup>" were among the first to enter the enemy redoubt. Fornance died two days later at a field hospital, was wrapped in a blanket, and buried on the battlefield in a pit with nine other bodies. He was 48. After the war, the body of James Fornance was repatriated and buried with his family at the Baton Rouge National Cemetery.

**Written by Jon Bebbington.**

**EXHIBITS AND ACTIVITIES News:**

**Battery Fornance Exhibit Area Project Proposal:** The project concept is to prepare the 13-ft by 23 ft magazine for the #1 gun as an inviting exhibit space. The project is to install two Mine Battery exhibits near the door opening so they can be seen by visitors without entering the space. The project is to be funded by Donations and other sources of income.



Replicas —4.72 inch ammo box



Diagram of a mine, anchor and junction box —replicas

**West Point Digital History Project.** Phase 1. The West Point Cadets and faculty visited Fort Fremont in Aug 2025 to study homeland coastal defense at Fort Fremont at the turn of the 20th century. Complete. Phase 2. Develop a digital history story board of Fort Fremont—in progress. Phase 3. Create a digital animation of the operation and building of Fort Fremont. Target 2026.

**Your Donation will support the 2026-2027 Mission and Goals of FFF.**

The History Center Exhibits continue to expand. FFF continue enhancing the Fort for the Public to enjoy. Goals for 2026: (1) Implement recommendations for year 1 of the 5 year Plan. (2) Secure a room under Battery Fornance as recommended by the Carl Project. (Funding through Donations & Grants)

With your donation, you will receive the NEWS LETTER for one year By email or by US Mail (Circle one)

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