

Blue Crab Fun Bunch at Bar Harbor, Abingdon, MD, October 2015

Bar Harbor RV Park is located about 25 miles north of Baltimore, about 3 miles off I-95. Our travel time was about 2.5 hours from Mechanicsville. We avoided the Baltimore tunnels on I-95 and I-895 due to the prohibition on carrying propane tanks on the rig. We took the Francis Scott Key Bridge instead. Tolls are the same (\$12.00) either on the bridge or the tunnels. Our EZ-pass www.ezpassmd.com/ lets us slide right through the toll gates. The view from the bridge either looking at the Chesapeake Bay or the Baltimore harbor is awesome, but I don't get to look much trying to keep the rig in the lane. The wind was not much of a factor unlike September going to Ocean City, MD. Our camp sites were right at the water's edge on a little peninsular, water on three sides. Our rig was about ten feet from the water. And Yes, we fed the ducklings at the water, every morning just about nine...



Bar Harbor had several of these small piers every hundred feet or so along the water front.



Linda W and Greg chat on Thursday afternoon at Sid and Shirley's rig.



Since Sid and Shirley were hosting, they put up some fall decorations for the Blue Crabs to enjoy.



Bob S, aka Smokey Bear, gets into the decorating spirit.



A pair of bald eagles hangs out just off shore from our campsite. They were in the area all weekend as were geese, ducks and other water fowl. Photo by Di.



Ambiance at The Deck Crab House.



Friday night entertainment at The Deck Crab House: I think this group was a Country-Blues revival. They write some of their own songs.



Friday dinner at The Deck Crab House: brown paper table cloth, shorts and windows wide open set the mood for August on the dock.



Meals were served one order at a time. The roll-up steel shades will put a curtain of steel around the entire building for security after closing. Crabs are a high price commodity.



Saturday morning outside the Ft. McHenry reception center, a park ranger explains the origins of the large flag originally flown over the fort at the time of the British bombardment in September 25, 1814. The flag had 15 stars at the time, one for each state in the union. The commanding officer at the fort knew the British fleet was coming, since they had attacked and burned Washington D.C. a few weeks before. The CO had a seamstress in Baltimore make the huge flag so that the British fleet could see it from eight miles away out in the Chesapeake Bay. In those times the flag was only flown during the day. During the British bombardment during the night no one in Baltimore or on the main British fleet, remaining five miles out, knew if the fort garrison was still holding out. The British bombardment ships stayed two miles from the fort about a half mile outside of the range of the fort cannons. The bombardment ships used high angle mortars with about three mile range. During a twenty-five hour period the British fired some 1,800 mortar rounds at the fort. One round hit a gun crew, killing two officers and wounding four enlisted. That was the only significant damage. Most of the British rounds hit outside the fort area. During the night a British ground force in small boats was sent past the bombardment ships. Their plan was to enter the creek south of the fort to attack from the rear. The 2,500 British soldiers could have easily overwhelmed the fort garrison and extra 600 soldiers guarding the rear of the fort. But, the British were unfamiliar with the harbor and went up the wrong creek in the dead of night and got lost. By the time they realized their navigation error, dawn was approaching. The landing force had to retreat back to the British fleet before day break because they were then in range of the shore batteries. Hence, came the expression "Up a creek". "Without a paddle" was added many years later. At first light of dawn the large flag was run up the huge flag pole made just for that flag. This was the flag observed by Francis Scott Key as he waited on the British prisoner ship. Key was set back on his launch with the prisoner whom he had negotiated a release. Out of gun powder and shot, the British fleet sailed away to their base in the Caribbean.



Ken W, Bob S, Linda W and Les checkout one of many markers on the grounds for the self-guided tour. This marker shows the different US flags that were flown over the fort during the period.



Lind W gets a shot of the cannon balls on display at the shore battery. These cannons were essentially the same as used on the large war ships in 1814. Bob S, Ken W and Larry listen to the explanation from a Park ranger.



Les sizes up one of the Civil War era cannons put in place in 1863. The brick and granite walk ways were put in place in 1936.



Uniforms from the 1814 era were hung up on pegs in the barracks. Photo by Di.



The three barracks buildings at Ft. McHenry are about the same as they were in 1814. The Park Service keeps these historic buildings in excellent repair. Photo by Di.



The armory building was used to service and repair the small arms and cannon used at Ft. McHenry. Small arms were also stored there. The granite block wall in the background was installed in 1936. Photo by Di.



Greg and Ken W discuss their history lessons. Photo by Di.



Reenactors are dressed in 1814 era uniforms. Sergeants wear red jackets. Photo by Di.



Larry, Paula and Ken W storm the entrance to Ft. McHenry during a much quieter era. The brick and granite entrance was installed by the Civilian Conservation Corp in 1936. Fort McHenry was built prior to the war of 1812. The fort is named for James McHenry, Secretary of War, 1796-1800. Photo by Di.



The Francis Scott Key Bridge is two miles from Ft. McHenry. The British bombardment ships in 1814 remained in the area of the present-day bridge to stay beyond the range of the cannons in the fort.



All of the gunpowder was stored in several underground brick vaults. The gunpowder was kept in air-tight wooden barrels. Each weighed 75 pounds. The barrels were rolled around regularly to keep the gunpowder from settling and caking in the barrels during long storage times. Lighted lamps were the only illumination available for the magazines; for safety concerns the lamps were not permitted inside the magazine. Small glass windows allowed the lamps to shed light into the magazines.



Paula, Larry and Greg pause outside the Officers' Quarters from lots of walking around Ft. McHenry. Photo by Di.



Sid checks out the wooden feather bed minus the ticking. He reports that the platform is composed of solid boards. The commanding officer may have had ticking composed of goose down feathers. The usual ticking would be straw or hay. Hence, came the term "roll in the hay". Photo by Bob S.



Bob S surveys the Commanding Officer's office.



Long silent upper gun battery guards the Baltimore harbor. These cannons were placed here in 1863 during the Civil War. The Francis Scott Key Bridge is two miles away. That is the approximate location where the British bombardment ships stayed just outside of the shore guns' range of one and a half miles. The rest of the British fleet stayed out about five miles. The Civil War cannons had a five mile range and were never used for a war shot.



Linda W and Greg have different ideas about living on the edge while walking the grounds at Ft. McHenry. The two ships in the center of the picture are ocean going cable laying ships. These two ships are used to lay and repair undersea cables mostly in the North Atlantic Ocean. Even in our age of satellite communications, undersea fiber optic cables carry lots of digital traffic and do it much cheaper than satellites.



1814 reenactors at Ft. McHenry with tourists from Japan. Larry and Paula are in the background. The fancy brickwork and granite caps were installed in 1936 by the CCC .



Saturday lunch was at a Burger King off I-95 Exit 74 after our visit to Ft. McHenry.



Bob S takes in the late day ambience on the water before dinner. Photo by Di.



Pot luck buffet for Saturday dinner at the water's edge with quite conversation does not get much better. The onlooker couple standing by the tree did not seem to be hungry and declined to eat with us.



Cool crisp October air, excellent food and friends make for some good times. Look around the table and you will see all life's trials and tribulations are put aside for a few precious moments.



Les listens as Mary G makes a point at the business meeting.



Bob S thinks it is still summer while Sid, Greg and the rest are bundled up. We did enjoy our last campfire of the season. Photo by Kat.



Wagon Master Greg did good on us for 2015 and is already working on 2016. It seems at every campout this year Greg has been helping one and all to park rigs, fix something, lend something or advice. Yes, we left that giant pine tree unscathed at Frontier Town. Thank you Greg. Photo by Di.

Shirley and I enjoyed hosting the campout at Bar Harbor, such a lovely peaceful spot to camp. Thank you to all who attended.

Our next meeting will be at the Golden Corral, California, MD, for lunch at 1:00 PM on November 21, 2015. One order of business will be election of officers for 2016. Open nominations will be received and a slate presented. Christmas party plans will be finalized.

Our hosts for the Golden Corral meeting will be Greg and Di.

Regards,

Sid