Vicksburg

brothers fought for their principles. Here heroes died for their country and a unified people will forever cherish the precious legacy of their noble manhood,” proclaims a granite monument, and nearby is a bronze statue of the Union leader in full military dress atop his steed.

Gary O'Reilly of Pine Bluff, Ark., and a friend visiting from Seattle were examining the tunnel that is part of Thayer's Approach. "During the afternoon of May 22, Union troops commanded by Brig. Gen. John M. Thayer stormed up this hill toward Confederates dug in at the top. They were stopped by geography and enemy fire," according to the brochure on the battlefield prepared by the National Park Service.

"Later, Thayer's men began digging a 6-foot-deep approach trench toward the Southern position. His soldiers used the tunnel beneath the road to avoid crossing the ridge where they would be exposed to Confederate fire." O'Reilly said he had visited the battlefield four or five times before, but hadn't found the tunnel under the road until this trip. "I bring everybody who visits down here. If you really want to see some Southern history, this is the place for it. This and Natchez are the most interesting places to see."

All that is left atop Fort Hill are two black cannons. Fort Hill anchored the left flank of the Confederate lines during the siege, and so formidable were its defenses that no Union attack was ever made against it.

Each state involved in the Civil War has a monument dedicated to it. The Louisiana Monument is a tall granite column with a lighted torch on top, the Mississippi Monument is granite with bronze figures depicting battle; the Alabama Monument is a bronze statue of four men fighting unseen troops, and a wounded man drinking from a cup held by a woman.

That woman "is a poignant reminder that while husbands and sons were absent, the women maintained the home and kept the spirit of Alabama alive and uplifted," said park historian Terry Wincel.

The Vicksburg National Military Park is located on Clay Street, within a mile of Interstate 20, and is open every day but Christmas. Entrance fee is $3 per car, and picnicking is allowed in designated areas.
Citizens dig caves in effort to escape relentless shelling

Vicksburg

BY KIMBERLY BROWN

The town sits quietly through the day, a small slice of peace in the midst of a constant battle. But at night, the town comes alive as the residents dig deeper into the earth to protect themselves from the relentless shelling.

The caves are made from a network of tunnels and chambers, dug by hand from the surrounding earth. Some are small, barely large enough for a person to crouch down, while others are spacious enough to accommodate a family. The tunnels are lit by candles or oil lamps, and the walls are lined with shelves for food and water.

The residents are brave and determined, willing to endure any hardship to survive. They know that the war is not yet over, and that the shelling will continue until the enemy is defeated.

The town is a symbol of resilience and courage, a testament to the human spirit's ability to endure even the most difficult of circumstances. And as the sun rises and the town awakens, the residents know that they must continue their fight for survival, one day at a time.