

NEWS & NOTES *continued*

## AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

## Fort Moultrie National Monument

*A sergeant's bravery is depicted on the last quarter in the U.S. Mint's 2016 series.*

▶ FORT MOULTRIE HAS LONG LIVED in the shadow of its more famous neighbor, Fort Sumter. But Fort Moultrie and its 171 years of defending America's Atlantic coast take the spotlight on the fifth and final coin of 2016 in the U.S. Mint's America the Beautiful Quarters® (ATB) program.

Fort Moultrie is located on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, on the north side of the entrance to

Meanwhile, the fort's spongy palmetto logs were credited with absorbing blows from the British cannons. With its walls standing strong, the Americans were able to return fire. Low on gun powder, they planned their shots carefully and were successful in crippling the British fleet and forcing its retreat.

Jasper's heroism is depicted on the quarter honoring Fort Moultrie and representing South Carolina in the ATB series. It shows the young sergeant returning the tattered flag to the fort while smoke rises from the British ships' cannon fire in the background.

Fort Sullivan was renamed for Moultrie, who was promoted to brigadier general in the Continental Army in September 1776, but the structure fell into disrepair after the Revolutionary War. By 1791, little of it remained. Three years later, Congress sought to bolster the young nation's coastal defenses in response to the war between England and France. A second

Fort Moultrie, completed in 1798, was one of 20 new fortresses constructed along America's Atlantic coast. But it, too, suffered from neglect and was destroyed by a hurricane in 1804. By 1807, many other coastal forts also were in need of extensive restoration, so Congress authorized a second round of funding to bring the structures up to date. The result was a third Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, this one made of brick and completed in 1809. Additionally, Fort

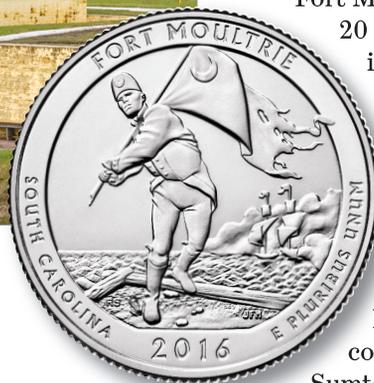
Sumter was constructed in 1829 in the middle of the entrance to Charleston Harbor.

Fort Moultrie changed little until December 1860, when South Carolina seceded from the Union. Federal troops abandoned the structure in favor of the newer and stronger Fort Sumter. At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861, Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, and the nation was plunged into civil war.

After the American Civil War, Fort Moultrie continued to play a role in America's coastal defenses well into the 20th century. Updates were made to the structure as warfare technology changed in the late 1800s and early 1900s. "Larger weapons were emplaced elsewhere on Sullivan's Island, and the old fort became just a small part of the Fort Moultrie Military Reservation that covered much of the island," explains the National Park Service. "The world wars brought new threats of submarine and aerial attack



▲ Fort Moultrie, as it stands today, was completed in 1809. A hurricane destroyed the previous structure in 1804, while the first fell into disrepair after the Revolutionary War.



Charleston Harbor. Fort Sullivan, as it was then called, was constructed to protect the harbor and City of Charleston. It was still under construction when it was attacked on June 28, 1776, by a fleet of nine British warships under the command of Commodore Sir Peter Parker. The fort was defended primarily by members of the 2nd South Carolina Regiment, led by Colonel William Moultrie.

During the ensuing nine-hour battle, a British cannonball knocked down the staff that held the fort's regimental flag, causing it to fall outside the fort's wall.

Sergeant William Jasper braved enemy fire to recover the banner. As the bombardment continued, he held it aloft on a temporary flagpole until a new staff could be raised.

## HEROIC ACTION

- Mintage: unlimited.
- Designed by Richard Scott and engraved by Joseph Menna.
- For more information or to place an order, visit [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov).

and required new means of defense at Moultrie.”

Fort Moultrie was decommissioned following World War II. South Carolina donated the site to the National Park Service in 1960, and it became part of the Fort Sumter National Monument, which was established in 1948. (This date is the basis for the Fort Moultrie quarter’s sequential place in the ATB series.) “Today Fort Moultrie has been restored to portray the major periods of its history,” the National Park Service says. “A visitor to the fort moves steadily backwards in time from the World War II Harbor Entrance Control Post to the site of the palmetto log fort of 1776.”

Five of the seven designs submitted by the U.S. Mint for review depicted representations of the Sergeant Jasper story. A sixth depicted the type of cannon used at the original fort, with palmetto trees and a crescent in the background. A seventh displayed the word “Liberty” superimposed on a crescent. Colonel Moultrie wore a silver crescent on his uniform, denoting his status as the fort’s ranking commander. The symbol also appears on the 2nd South Carolina Regiment flag, which Moultrie designed.

The Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee (CCAC) and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) were split in their design recommendations to the mint, though not dramatically. The CCAC endorsed the design eventually chosen, which was created by Richard Scott of the U.S. Mint’s Artistic Infusion Program and executed by U.S. Mint Sculptor/Engraver Joseph Menna. (The



▲ Coin designs depicting Sergeant William Jasper’s heroic efforts during the Battle of Sullivan’s Island (pictured) proved popular with reviewers.

motif also was the second choice of site representatives.) The CFA recommended a different design depicting the Sergeant Jasper narrative (the first choice of site representatives). The Treasury Department made the final decision, as it does on all designs.

Fort Sumter National Monument Superintendent Tim Stone called the Sergeant Jasper story a “very symbolic image to the people of South Carolina.” Thanks to the ATB quarter, that image is now meaningful to the entire country.

—Arlyn G. Sieber