



Photo by Dina C. Smith
Ginger and Charles Smith of Dixie rest for a snapshot before their mile-long walk to the cliff and Dunnottar Castle in Stonehaven, Scotland. The castle inspired the design of the castle in Disney's 2012 animated film, "Brave."

Guard family heads to Scotland

In mid-May, a retired National Guard couple, Ginger and Charles Smith, and their twin daughters took an unusual Family vacation. They visited points of interest in Scotland that inspired the animators and designers of the 2012 animated feature film, "Brave" and other sights associated with their ancestral history in the Scottish highlands.

Ginger served nearly 30 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard and was mobilized at CSJFTC from 2004-November 2010 when she retired.

Charles is a Vietnam Veteran who served in the 890th Engineer Battalion which took him to several deployments away from home including Honduras, Germany and Costa Rica. He held an Active Guard Reserve position at Camp Shelby for nearly six years before retiring in 1995.

This was the first leisure trip overseas for the couple. The "Brave Adventure" was custom planned by Scotland Made Easy and their daughter, Dana, who works as a civilian contractor in the Camp Shelby Public Affairs Office.

They toured Dunnottar Castle and the megalithic tombs of Clava Cairns.

"My favorite part of the trip was seeing Dunnottar Castle. The history came alive for me and it made it more real," said Ginger.

"Dunnottar was definitely the most fascinating," said Charles.

In addition to seeing the sights associated with the Disney film, they visited sights associated with their Scottish ancestors. This included the town of Newtonmore that features the Clan Macpherson Museum to learn about their Family history.

"It was very exciting to see history

come alive at the clan museum and to be in the homeland of our forebearers," said Ginger.

Other places they toured were more historically significant like the Culloden Battlefield and Cawdor Castle that inspired Shakespeare's "Macbeth."

"I enjoyed the Culloden battlefield because of our military service. I found the demonstrations of the military strategies like the highland charge, very interesting," said Ginger.

In the Scottish lowlands, they toured Edinburgh Castle, the royal mile and William Wallace Monument.

After touring Scotland, they visited the Republic of Ireland where they toured Dublin City, took part in a medieval feast at Bunratty Castle and viewed the famous Cliffs of Moher, and the region of Ireland called "the burren" which means "a rocky place."



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