

Sumter to Appomattox

The Official Newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of The American Civil War Round Table of Australia

No. 12, November 2003

A Message from the Chairman –

As we approach our last meeting for the year it is worth reflecting on our year's activities with a view to ascertaining what we need to keep and what should be changed for 2004. First, we have a "new" Committee – actually, it is the old Committee with an additional two members. As Chapter Chairman, I am looking forward to the challenges ahead for us in 2004, confident that the executive team we have is the "right stuff" to continue to meet the diverse needs and interests of our increasing membership and to consolidate our many gains.

2003 saw another successful full-day conference with participants not only coming from Country NSW but Victoria, Queensland and South Australia also. We have had a special meeting, also, in September where an American father and son team spoke on West Point and some of the personal relationships amongst commanders on both sides of the conflict at the Battle of Gettysburg. These special events, coupled with our regular program of meetings have provided a most interesting and worthwhile program that continues to meet the diverse interests of our expanding membership. I am confident that we will continue to keep up this track-record in 2004.

In our last Newsletter, I advised that we had appointed one of our new members, Bruce McLennan, to the newly created position of Webmaster, with the specific tasks of developing and maintaining an internet web-site for the Chapter. Bruce is certainly a highly experienced professional in this area and even though we have decided to "hasten slowly", you will start to see in the coming months a significant impact of this initiative.

Presented as a supplement to this Newsletter is a most interesting article titled *Sword of Honour*. This article is from the *Spectator* magazine from the United Kingdom. It was shown to us by David Wilson and is included for your reading over the summer holidays.

Finally, I would like to thank Alan Winkworth for his most interesting, authoritative and thoroughly researched presentation on Civil War medical services at our last meeting. Medicine has certainly come a long way since the Civil War days. Thank you and well done Alan!

Paul Kensey

Next Month's Meeting

Our last scheduled meeting for this year is to be held as usual at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Wednesday, December 3**, commencing at 7pm.

As for our previous meetings this year, members will be able to meet at the Club from 6pm for a bistro style meal and after the formal proceedings of the meeting, members will be able to have a drink and discuss further the issues raised during the meeting.

The presentation planned for the evening is to be given by Rev David Smith who will address the subject of:

The Civil War – Which Side Was God On?

Father Dave's professional background and his personal experiences provide an excellent and authoritative knowledge base for this presentation. Furthermore, he has all year to ponder the issues raised by title. The paper which accompanies the presentation is a most worthwhile read. You can be guaranteed that this will be a challenging and thought provoking presentation that will be followed, no doubt, with a lively question/answer and comment session.

As for all our meetings, a written paper for the presentation will be available at the conclusion of the meeting and later, on request. Members living outside the Sydney Metropolitan Area will have the paper mailed to them automatically with the next Newsletter.

Our Christmas Function

This year again, Roger Dixon and his charming wife Elaine have agreed to our holding the end-of-year Christmas function at their vineyard on the Broke Road in the Hunter wine growing region out from Cessnock. This function will be held on **Sunday, December 14, from 12 noon** and will include a relaxed outdoors luncheon. If our previous time at Roger's property in 2001 is any guide, you may be guaranteed a very special day.

An invitation to this function, including directions to the venue and an RSVP is enclosed with this Newsletter.

A Nice Piece of Trivia...

Jenny Holder, one of our members from South Australia, has come across a nice piece of trivia relating to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, that she found in the *Journal of Civil War Medicine*.

The journal reports that Daniel Chester French, the artist who sculptured the statue of Lincoln, had a son who was deaf. He made Lincoln's hands in the form of the letters 'A' and 'L' in hand sign language. His left hand formed the letter 'A' and right hand the letter 'L'. This feature of the Lincoln Memorial, however, can be seen only if one is positioned above the statue.

Thanks Jenny, for sharing this information with our members.

Reduce Me to the Ranks!

Major General William S Harney, who played a somewhat controversial role in Missouri in the early days of the Civil War, was a not a person to mess with.

In the early 1830s, when he was in command of the detachment at Fort Winnebago, the then Captain Harney had occasion to discipline a burly soldier who had the reputation as the post's boxing champion. Responding to Harney's dressing down, the soldier said, "If you were an enlisted man, or I a captain, you would not treat me this way"

Harney promptly took the man behind the barracks and said, "Consider yourself a captain, and do your best."

The two went at it and Harney, no little man himself, soon knocked the man to the ground several times.

Finally the man said, "Captain, I have been a captain long enough, I would now like to be reduced to the ranks."

Source: North and South, Vol 6, No. 4, May 2003

Civil War Lectures

Gary Gallagher, the eminent Civil War historian, presently at the University of Virginia, has a course on the Civil War comprising 48 lectures that is available in cassette tape, CD and DVD format with accompanying lecture summaries. At least three of our members have undertaken this course of lectures and each speaks highly of their value as a learning experience.

A copy of these lectures in cassette tape format is now available for short-term loan at no cost. Anyone interested in this should contact John Cook at one of our meetings or by telephone on 9412 3214.

"Discovery" of Gravesites...

Maureen Morris has passed on a newspaper clipping from the Redland Times in Queensland (June 6, 2003), sent to her by her mother, which states:

"Two soldiers, veterans of the American Civil War, have been discovered at rest in the Dunwich Cemetery on North Stradbroke Island.

Members of the American Civil War Round Table Association made the discovery and plaques now commemorate the lives of the two soldiers who both fought for the Union North...

...The graves belong to Edward Charles Wright, who was also known as Edward Charles Wright Osbourne and Frederick Downey Macomber, who both died in the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, which operated in the island in the late 1800s and the early years of the last century..."

Whilst it is great news that our Queensland cousins have found these gravesites and presumably will undertake some form of continuing maintenance for them, it is quite incorrect to attribute "discovery" of the gravesites to them.

The pioneering research of Roy W Parker on the subject of Civil War veterans in Australia conducted over two decades from the late 1970s included an earlier "discovery" of these two veterans' gravesites. Much of the primary research about these two veterans, including the acquisition of a marker/plaque from the Veterans Administration in Washington, DC, was organised by Terry Foenander, who with other members of the Civil War Research Society, shared information with Roy Parker over many years.

Detailed information relating to these veterans whose gravesites are located in Dunwich Cemetery, is included in the book edited by Roy Parker's daughter, Virginia Crocker and published in 2000. This book, *Civil War Veterans in Australia*, provides a most comprehensive documentation of Roy Parker's research. It presents most of the information presented in the newspaper article about each of these veterans together with a considerable amount of most worthwhile and interesting additional detail about them.

Any member wanting a copy of this book should contact Virginia Crocker on telephone 9449 6554 or by e-mail at crockers@ozemail.com.au The cost of the book is \$25:00 and will be posted for this cost anywhere in Australia.

This publication is the official newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia. All inquiries regarding the Newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter by telephone on 9449 3720 or at PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 2075 or by e-mail to bpoconn@bigpond.com

What Happened in November?

Hatches and Dispatches

November 3, 1816 – Jubal Early, (CSA), is born in Franklin County, Virginia;

November 5, 1818 – Soldier-politician, Benjamin Franklin Butler, (USA), is born in Deerfield, NH;

November 9, 1825 – A P (Ambrose Powell) Hill, (CSA), is born in Culpepper, Virginia;

November 13, 1814 – Joseph (Fighting Joe) Hooker is born in Hadley, Mass:

Command Changes

November 1, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan succeeds retiring Lieutenant General Winfield Scott as general-in-chief of the Union armies;

November 2, 1861 – Major General John C Frémont is relieved of command of the Union's Western Department;

November 5, 1862 – President Lincoln relieves General McClellan of command of the Army of the Potomac replacing him with Ambrose Burnside;

November 10, 1862 – McClellan takes an emotional, spectacular farewell of the Army of the Potomac;

November 24, 1862 – Confederate General Joseph E Johnston is assigned to the major command in the West comprising six states;

November 30, 1863 – Gathering his defeated army in north-west Georgia, Braxton Bragg learns that his resignation has been accepted by President Davis.

Battles etc.

November 11, 1864 – Federals in Rome, Ga., destroy bridges, foundries, warehouses of use to the enemy and proceed towards Atlanta;

November 16, 1864 – General Sherman and 60,000 Union troops leave a burned out Atlanta and begin their march to the Sea;

November 17, 1863 – The Confederate siege of Knoxville, Tenn, gets underway and the partial siege of Chattanooga continues;

November 29, 1864 – The Federal army under command of John Schofield withdraws under Hood's nose without suffering attack in the "Spring Hill Affair" (in Tennessee).

Other Significant Events

November 6, 1860 – Lincoln is elected President of the United States;

November 8, 1864 – Lincoln is re-elected as US President with Andrew Johnson of Tennessee as his Vice President;

November 12, 1861 – The Confederate blockade runner *Fingal*, purchased in England, arrives in Savannah with military supplies;

November 15, 1861 – The YMCA organises the US Christian Commission for support to Federal soldiers;

November 19, 1863 – Lincoln delivers the *Gettysburg Address* at the dedication ceremony for the new national cemetery at Gettysburg;

November 25, 1864 – Confederate agents set fire to a number of New York hotels and Barnum's Museum without causing significant damage;

November 26, 1861 – A convention at Wheeling adopts a constitution for a new stateto be called West Virginia, created by secession from Virginia;

November 27, 1863 – General John Hunt Morgan and a number of his officers escape from the Ohio State Penitentiary and manage to reach Confederate territory;

November 28, 1861 – Southern Congress officially admits Missouri to the Confederate States of America.

Famous Last Words...

"I shall come out of this fight a live major general or a dead brigadier"

- Brigadier General Albert Perrin, killed in action at the Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864.

"I have done the best I could for you. Go home now and if you make us good citizens as you have soldiers, you will do well and I shall always be proud of you. Goodbye, and God bless you all"

- Lee's last words to his troops at Appomattox, April 1865.

Who Were the Top Ten Generals?

The leading Civil War magazine, *North and South*, published recently the views of six leading historians and authors on the question of:

Who were the top ten Civil War generals?

The participants in this forum were Steven E Woodworth, Associate Professor of History, Texas Christian University and author of several Civil War books including *Jefferson Davis and his Generals*; Reid Mitchell, author of *Civil War Soldiers and The Vacant Chair*; Gordon Rhea, author of a series of books on the Overland Campaign, the most recent of which is *Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26 – June 3, 1864*; John V Simon, executive director of the Ulysses S Grant Association and Editor of the Grant papers; Steven H Newton, Professor of History at Delaware State University and author of several books including *Lost for the Cause: The Confederate Army in 1864*; and Keith Poulter, Editor of *North and South*.

These historians were asked to rank from 1 to 10 the generals on both sides of the conflict and to provide comment on the other participants' "top ten" lists.

As can be seen from the table, below, there is a remarkable degree of consensus in the judgments of these eminent Civil War historians of the "top spots".

The table shows that Grant and Lee stand head and shoulders above everyone else. Indeed, only three other generals, Sherman, Thomas and Jackson appear in the lists of all six participants.

Not surprisingly, the Confederacy's most successful army, the *Army of Northern Virginia*, contributed twice as many generals to the list as the *Army of Tennessee* whilst the Union's most successful army, the *Army of the Tennessee*, despite its much smaller size, contributed twice as many names to the list as the *Army of the Potomac*.

It is noteworthy, also, to see that neither Meade nor JEB Stuart have a place in any of the participants' "top ten" listings. It is surprising that Halleck gets a mention in Steven Newton's list and his justification for Halleck appears somewhat weak.

No doubt these listings will provide much discussion amongst Civil War enthusiasts and as much variation in judgments as occurred with these expert historians.

RATINGS OF TOP TEN GENERALS

| | MITCHELL | SIMON | WOODWORTH | NEWTON | RHEA | POULTER |
|----|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|
| 1 | Grant | Grant | Grant | Grant | Lincoln | Grant |
| 2 | Lee | Lee | Lee | Lee | Grant | Lee |
| 3 | Sherman | Sherman | Sherman | Thomas | Lee | Meigs |
| 4 | Jackson | J Johnston | Jackson | Jackson | Thomas | Sherman |
| 5 | Meigs/Gorgas | Forrest | Sheridan | Halleck | Sherman | Thomas |
| 6 | --- | Sheridan | Thomas | Longstreet | Gordon | Jackson |
| 7 | Beauregard | Thomas | McPherson | Hooker | Forrest | Sheridan |
| 8 | Thomas | Longstreet | Logan | Hampton | Hampton | Gordon |
| 9 | Early | Jackson | Hancock | Gorgas | Jackson | Cleburne |
| 10 | Butler | Scott | Forrest | Sherman | Longstreet | Logan |

North and South have indicated there is a follow-up article in preparation titled "Who Were the Worst Ten Generals?" and this is likely to provide as much variation in judgments from both experts and enthusiasts alike as this article has.