

Sumter to Appomattox

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

No. 22, July 2005

Please note, our new website www.americancivilwar.asn.au is now up and running

A Message from the Chairman –

Although we have had to postpone our conference until next year, your Committee continues to work on its planning. I can now report that the date has been set as Saturday, April 8, 2006, so put that in the forward planning part of your diary. I have received a most positive reaction from the US Consul General, Mr Stephen T Smith, to being involved in our conference and an invitation has already been sent to him to open the conference and deliver one of the keynote addresses.

With the start of the new financial year, our annual subscriptions for 2005/2006 are now due. You will find enclosed with this Newsletter an invoice for \$25 which I hope you will send off as soon as possible. At the present time, our financial situation is quite healthy, thanks to your generous support of our regular raffles and the prompt payment of the annual dues. We need to keep this going, particularly with the expected costs associated with next year's conference.

I had the privilege of representing our Chapter of the ACWRTA at the funeral of our friend and fellow member, Paul Davis. A number of us attended what was a simple but very moving service for farewell Paul. The eulogy was given by his daughter and provided an insight into what a remarkable man Paul was not only in his professional life with OPSM but as a family man with wide interests. Our Chapter has lost a truly wonderful person but it is my hope that Pauline will continue her association with us.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting at the Roseville Memorial RSL Club.

Paul Kensey

Our Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held at our normal venue, the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Monday, August 8, 2005**, with members, as usual, members being able to meet at the Club **from 6pm for a bistro style meal**.

The speaker at this meeting will be one of our members, **Dr Alan Winkworth**, who will speak on the topic:

Sex in the Civil War – A Medical Perspective

Those members who heard Alan speak previously on Civil War medical matters will appreciate how special this presentation will be. One can only wonder, however, how he is going to incorporate his trademark practical demonstrations into this presentation.

As is our normal practice, a paper of the presentation will be available to members at the conclusion of the meeting. Members living outside the Sydney Metropolitan Area will have the paper mailed to them with the next Newsletter in July.

Vale - Paul Davis

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of our esteemed member, Paul Davis. Paul, with his wife Pauline, were two of the most active members of our Chapter participating in all of our activities. His warm and friendly manner and the quiet knowledgeable way he engaged with us will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege to interact with him.

To Pauline and Paul's extended family we would wish to extend our deepest sympathy at this time for their loss.

It Happened in August

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

August 6, 1811 – Judah Philip Benjamin, Attorney General and Secretary of State of the Confederacy is born in St Thomas, British West Indies;

August 27, 1811 – Hannibal Hamlin, US Vice-President under Lincoln is born in Paris Hill Maine;

August 31, 1822 – Fitz-John Porter (USA) is born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire;

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

August 1, 1864 – Philip Sheridan is named Commander of the Army of the Shenandoah and charged with ridding the valley of Confederates especially Jubal Early

August 17, 1862 – JEB Stuart is assigned command of all cavalry of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia;

August 20, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan assumes command of the newly organised Department and Army of the Potomac.

WANTON KILLING AND DESTRUCTION

August 7, 1861 – The village of Hampton, Va, near Fort Monroe, is burned by Confederate forces;

August 13, 1831 – Nat Turner slave insurrection begins in Southampton County, Va, with 55 whites and about 100 blacks killed;

August 21, 1863 – Confederate guerrillas under command of Quantrill sack Lawrence, Kansas, killing about 150 men and boys and destroying over \$1.5 million in property;

August 25, 1863 – Following Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, Federals force some 20,000 people in Missouri from their homes which are then burned;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

August 5, 1864 – Union forces under Admiral David Farragut defeat Confederates at the Battle of Mobile Bay;

August 9, 1862 – The Federal Army of Virginia under John Pope clashes with Stonewall Jackson's corps at the Battle of Cedar Mountain;

August 10, 1861 – Confederate troops are victorious at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, the major battle of the Civil War in Missouri;

August 11, 1862 – In a daring raid, Confederate guerrillas capture Independence, Mo.;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

August 15, 1864 – Federals capture the English-built Confederate cruiser *Georgia* off Lisbon, Portugal;

August 18, 1864 – The Battle of the Weldon Railroad in Virginia, begins;

August 22, 1862 - In a raid on Catlett's Station, Virginia, JEB Stuart captures Union General Pope's baggage train, including Pope's papers;

August 23, 1864 – Fort Morgan, Mobile Bay, falls to the Federals;

August 26 – 30, 1862 – The Second Bull Run (or Manassas) Campaign ending in a Confederate victory;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

August 2, 1861 – Federal Congress passes the first national income tax measure calling for #% Of income over \$800:

August 4, 1861 – a meeting is held in New York to combat intemperance in the Federal army;

August 8, 1863 – In the wake of the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, Lee offers to resign as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. Davis rejects the offer;

August 14, 1861 – Major General John C Fremont declares martial law in St Louis city and county;

August 19, 1861 - Confederate Congress agrees to an alliance with Missouri resulting in Missouri having two state governments, Federal and Confederate;

August 29, 1863 - The Confederate *H L Hunley* sinks in Charleston Harbour, the five-man crew of the submarine are lost.

Famous Last Words

“Forward! For God's sake, forward!”

- Union Major General John Reynolds,
just before being mortally wounded,
July 1, 1863

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 secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

A Postcard from America

It was great to receive in the last few days a postcard from Roger and Elaine Dixon in New Jersey. They write –

“Hi All,

*Just returned from a weekend in Harpers Ferry. Fascinating little town (300 people). Did the John Brown bit and then spent 4 hours at Antietam. Very interesting and well looked after. Please pass on regards to all.
Roger and Elaine Dixon”*

Any member who wishes to drop Roger and Elaine a line, their address is:

Roger and Elaine Dixon
PO Box 104
Ringoes, NJ, 08551,
USA

Shelby Foote Dies

Author and historian, Shelby Foote died aged 88 on the evening of June 27 in Memphis, Tenn.

Foote, a native Mississippian and long time Memphis resident, wrote six novels but is best remembered for his three-volume, 3,000 page narrative history of the Civil War and his subsequent appearance on the Ken Burns' Civil War documentary first shown in 1990.

The writing of his book, *The Civil War*, took 20 years to complete and used a flowing narrative style that enabled readers to enjoy it like an historical novel. Foote claimed that this narrative style of writing "...is the kind that comes closest to telling the truth. You can never get to the truth, but that's your goal".

It was this Civil War history that landed Foote a leading role in Ken Burns' documentary. Foote's soft Southern drawl and gentlemanly manner made him an instant celebrity, a role with which he was unaccustomed and, somewhat uncomfortable.

Foote served in World War II but never saw combat. During the War, he was a captain in the artillery but lost his commission for using a vehicle without authorisation to visit a female friend and was discharged from the Army. He then joined the Marine but was still in training when the war ended.

Early in his career Foote adopted the habit of writing by hand with an old-fashioned dipped pen, a practice that continued throughout his life. He kept bound copies of his hand-written manuscripts in his Memphis home.

Married three times, Foote leaves his wife, Gwyn, a daughter, Margaret Shelby, and a son, Huger Lee. He married Gwyn in 1956, three years after he moved to Memphis.

Source: Associated Press, June 28, 2005

A Great New Series of Lectures

Members may recall that in earlier Newsletters, courses of lectures developed by The Teaching Company and featuring the eminent Civil War historian, Gary Gallagher, were available on cassette, CD and DVD at most attractive prices.

Indeed, our Chapter purchased sets of these two courses for short-term loans to members. These two lecture series were *The American Civil War* (48 lectures) and *Robert E Lee and His High Command* (24 lectures) and are presently available by contacting Paul Kensey or John Cook.

The Teaching Company has now come up with a new course of lectures that will be of interest to many of our members. This is a twelve lecture series titled *Mr Lincoln: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* and is presented by Professor Allen C Guelzo, Henry R Luce Professor of the Civil War Era and Professor of History at Gettysburg College. The 12 lectures that comprise this course are:

- Lecture 1: Young Man Lincoln
- Lecture 2: Whig Meteor
- Lecture 3: Lincoln, Law and Politics
- Lecture 4: The Mind of Abraham Lincoln
- Lecture 5: Lincoln and Slavery
- Lecture 6: The Great Debates
- Lecture 7: Lincoln and Liberty, Too
- Lecture 8: The Uncertain President
- Lecture 9: The Emancipation Moment
- Lecture 10: Lincoln's Triumph
- Lecture 11: The President's Sword
- Lecture 12: The Dream of Lincoln

This series of lectures maintains a high standard of instruction that was observed in the earlier series with Gary Gallagher and is recommended to all who wish to study this remarkable leader, politician and man in any depth.

Any member wishing to peruse the course outline or to ascertain the availability of the lectures should contact John Cook.

Jumping the Gun?

On March 15, 1861, Confederate President, Jefferson Davis notified the Governor of Virginia that he wished to commission Robert E Lee and Joseph E Johnston as generals in the Confederate Army.

At this time, however, Virginia had not yet seceded from the Union nor had either officer resigned from the United States Army!

- Source: *North and South, Volume 8, No. 3*

Military Blunders

In the third of our series of military blunders, the lost opportunity for General George McClellan to inflict a decisive defeat on Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Antietam and possibly shorten the War, is outlined.

At the beginning of September 1862, fresh from victory at Second Manassas, Lee convinced Davis that the time was ripe to carry the war into the North and the best option for this was an invasion of the border state of Maryland. Lee argued that as many Marylanders were already fighting for the South and that the presence of Confederate forces might persuade the state to secede. More importantly, a decisive victory in Union territory would encourage European recognition of the Confederacy and might even force the Union to sue for peace.

On September 4, 1862, to the strains of '*Maryland My Maryland*', Lee crossed the Potomac and three days later, at Frederick, issued a proclamation inviting Marylanders to join him. The response was disappointing and on September 10, Lee continued his advance north-east towards Hagerstown. At this time, Lee divided his forces by sending Jackson with 25,000 troops to capture the large Union garrison and arsenal at Harpers Ferry and thus secure his rear. Lee was prepared to risk splitting his forces because he was convinced that Pope would need time to reorganise his beaten Army of Virginia from Second Manassas. Pope had been relieved of command, however, and his army incorporated into the Army of the Potomac under command of Major General George B McClellan, the 35 year old West Point graduate with demonstrated organisational and training skills. McClellan was an overly cautious commander, a trait that had proven disastrous in the earlier Peninsula Campaign, and was to be a major factor in Lee being able to retreat intact after the Antietam battle.

In what was an outrageous piece of good fortune, McClellan gained access to Lee's plan of operations including the dividing of his forces. This information was contained in a copy of Special Order No. 191 wrapped around three cigars in an area recently vacated by D H Hill's division. McClellan was ecstatic:

*"Here is the paper with which if I cannot whip
Bobbie Lee, I will be willing to go home"*

McClellan was certainly able to "talk the talk" but when it came to the crunch, he couldn't "walk the walk"!

Aware that Lee had split his forces, McClellan ordered his forces to move through the passes of the South Mountain range and thus drive a wedge between Jackson at Harper's Ferry and Lee near Hagerstown. When this battle for the gaps began, however, McClellan delayed an all out attack until his full army had been deployed believing that D H Hill's rearguard had been reinforced by Longstreet's I Corps. In fact, Longstreet did not arrive until late in the day and a great opportunity for victory was thrown away. On the night of September 14, Lee withdrew 6 miles west to Sharpsburg close to the Potomac ford.

Lee's plan to give battle at Antietam was a calculated risk. He was heavily outnumbered and, if defeated, his retreating army would be seriously impeded by the Potomac River. The Confederates needed a victory here to further discourage the North and to encourage European governments to recognise the Confederacy.

It was fortunate for Lee that he faced the cautious McClellan since a more aggressive commander would have pursued retreating Confederate forces so that they would be drawn into battle while Lee's forces were still divided. Not so McClellan, he wanted to be able to bring the full weight of his forces to bear on the enemy. It was not until September 17 that McClellan finally ordered the attack and still had the opportunity to defeat Lee. McClellan's plan of battle required careful timing and close supervision, but neither was exercised. What resulted was the bloodiest single day of the Civil War and with the timely arrival of A P Hill's division enabled Lee to withdraw with his army across the Potomac. Although a strategic victory for the Union, McClellan's failure to pursue Lee across the Potomac caused Lincoln to ask:

*"Are you not overcautious when you assume that
you cannot do what the enemy is constantly doing"*

It was the final straw. On November 7, McClellan was relieved of command and never again had a field command.

Special Issue of 'Time'

As is the custom of the publisher of the magazine, the July 4, 2005 issue of *Time* is a special issue and, this year, focused on the life of Abraham Lincoln. Its cover story titled *The True Lincoln* reported how America's 16th President was underestimated during his time in office, how he became an icon at his death and how present day historians are only now discovering the personal and political depth of the leader who saved the U.S. This issue of the magazine devotes over 20 pages to a series of seven articles focusing on different aspects of the man. These articles are:

- **The Journey** – Lincoln's life from the frontier to the Ford Theatre.
- **The Natural** – Was emotional IQ the source of his genius?
- **First Lady** – Historians have been hard on the President's wife.
- **War Leader** – How Lincoln found his ultimate leader – U S Grant.
- **Racial Divide** - How Lincoln and Frederick Douglass became pals.
- **To the Point** – Why Abe's oratory strikes a profound chord today.
- **Viewpoint** – Senator Barack Obama on loving Lincoln warts and all.

Any member who wishes to read these articles, might try accessing the archive section of magazine's website –

www.time.com/time/archive/