

Sumter to Appomattox

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

No. 30, September/October 2006

Please visit our website at www.americancivilwar.asn.au

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A Message from the Chairman –

As we come to our final regular meeting of the year with only our Christmas function to be held after it, I would wish to reflect on our year's activities. Without a doubt the highlight of the year was our Conference in April where we assembled a galaxy of excellent speakers who took the conference theme, *Appomattox and Beyond*, to a level not matched before in any of our activities. This conference was one that exceeded all of my expectations and it will be hard for the organisers of future conferences to maintain the standard set by this year's effort.

I have been concerned that the numbers attending our regular meetings have dropped off somewhat and I believe this has been due in large measure to the scheduling of our meetings once every two months. It is for this reason that your Committee has decided that for 2007 two significant changes are to be introduced. First, the meetings will be held on a monthly basis, February through to November. This will represent a challenge for our Program Director and it is more than likely there will be a more varied format of these meetings. Second, the meetings will now be scheduled on the second Monday of the month, noting that the Monday evening menu at the Club has been expanded beyond the boring "Roast Night"! I do hope that members will find these more regular meetings worthwhile and we will see a significant increase in our attendance figures.

I would wish to take this opportunity of thanking John Cook for "volunteering" to give the presentation at our next meeting on October 25, following a particularly late and untimely withdrawal of the scheduled speaker. I have had the opportunity of reading the paper that John is preparing for the meeting and you may be assured that your ideas and values will be in for a challenging and provocative time with his presentation.

I look forward to seeing you at the October meeting and at our forthcoming Christmas function in November.

Paul Kensey

Our Next Meeting

The next meeting for 2006 is to be held at our normal venue, the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Wednesday, October 25, 2006**, with members, as usual, members being able to meet at the Club **from 6pm for a bistro style meal**.

The speaker scheduled for this meeting is not available so John Cook has stepped into the breach to speak on the topic:

The Civil War – Whose Side Was God On?

A similar presentation to this was given to our Chapter of the Round Table back in 2003, but this time there will be a more historical emphasis although the more complex philosophical issues surrounding this topic will not be neglected. The presentation will give members an opportunity, also, to reflect on present day contexts, in particular, the situation in the Middle East and the so-called War on Terror.

As has been our practice in the past, the paper on which this presentation is based will be available to members at the conclusion of the meeting. Members from outside the Sydney metropolitan area will have this paper mailed to them automatically with the next Newsletter, whilst other members can receive a copy of the paper, on request

We hope you will make the effort to be at this last regular meeting for the year and we are looking forward to catching up with you then.

**Our Christmas Party
For Details See the Last Page
Of This Newsletter**

It Happened in October

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

October 1, 1864 - Famed Confederate spy, Mrs Rose Greenhow drowns as she tries to avoid capture;

October 2, 1800 – Nat Turner, slave and leader of slave insurrection at Southampton, Virginia in 1831 is born in Southampton County;

October 26, 1864 – Confederate guerrilla Bloody Bill Anderson is killed in an ambush near Richmond, Missouri.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

October 8, 1864 –General William T Sherman is named to command the Union Department of the Cumberland, with headquarters at Louisville;

October 11, 1861 – Brigadier General William R Rosecrans assumes command of the Federal Department of Western Virginia;

October 28, 1862 – Brigadier General John C Breckinridge assumes command of the Army of Middle Tennessee

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

October 16, 1859 – The abolitionist John Brown leads an unsuccessful raid on the government arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

October 19, 1831 – A small Confederate raiding party robs three Vermont banks of over \$200,000.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

October 4, 1862 – The Battle of Corinth, Miss., ends with a Confederate withdrawal from this important rail and road centre;

October 5, 1863 – Confederate torpedo boat *David* with a four man crew, attacks Federal ironclad *New Ironsides* outside Charleston Harbour;

October 6, 1861 – Confederate blockade runner *Alert* is captured by the Federal Navy off Charleston, S.C.;

October 7, 1864 – *USS Wachusett* captures the raider *CSS Florida* in a controversial action at Bahia, Brazil;

October 9, 1864 – Union cavalry under Custer and Merritt engage and rout Confederates at Tom's Brook (Round Top Mountain), Virginia;

October 14, 1863 – Confederates strike retreating Federals at Bristow Station, Va., in an inconclusive engagement;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

October 18, 1862 – John Hunt Morgan and his Confederate raiders defeat Federal cavalry near Lexington, Kentucky;

October 21, 1861 – Federal forces suffer a dramatic defeat at the Battle of Ball's Bluff (Leesburg), Virginia;

October 22, 1862 – Confederate cavalry capture London, Kentucky;

October 23, 1864 – Last Confederate effort in Missouri ends in defeat at the Battle of Westport;

October 27 1864 – In a daring raid, Union Lieutenant William B Cushing and a 15-man crew sink the Confederate ironclad *Albemarle* at Plymouth N.C.;

October 29, 1861 – Largest combined land-sea expedition ever mounted by the United States leaves Hampton Roads, Va., for the Carolina coast and Port Royal.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

October 3, 1863 – Federal War Department orders enlistment of Negro troops in the slave states of Maryland, Missouri and Tennessee;

October 10, 1862 – President Davis asks Virginia for a draft of 4,500 Negroes to work on the completion of fortification of Richmond;

October 12, 1861 – The first ironclad of the Union navy, the gunboat *St Louis* is launched at Carondelet, Missouri;

October 13, 1864 – Maryland voters narrowly adopt a new state constitution abolishing slavery;

October 15, 1863 – In Charleston Harbour Confederate submersible *H L Hunley* sinks for a second time during a practice dive. Seven men, including Hunley, its inventor die;

October 17, 1863 – President Lincoln issues a proclamation calling for 300,000 more volunteers for Federal armies;

October 20, 1864 – President Lincoln proclaims the last Thursday in November "...a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to Almighty God";

October 24, 1861 – Western Union completes the first transcontinental telegraph;

October 25, 1861 – The keel of the ironclad *USS Monitor* is laid at Greenpoint, Long Island;

October 31, 1864 – Nevada becomes the 36th state of the Union.

Could the South Have Won the War?

In a recent edition of magazine *North and South*, (Volume 9, No. 2), a panel of Civil War scholars and authors discussed the issue of whether the Confederacy could have won the War. This article provided a fascinating insight to the thinking of these Civil War experts and is well worth reading. Equally fascinating has been the response from readers to these discussions in a subsequent edition of the magazine (Volume 9, No. 4). In particular, one of these responses, addresses the often stated view that, if Atlanta had not been taken, McClellan might well have won the 1864 election and made peace with the Confederacy.

Tom Freeman from Cambridge, UK, argues (very persuasively) that the "McClellan peace deal", viz., granting an armistice and recognising Confederate independence, leaves out one critical figure in the scenario – Jefferson Davis. Freeman points out that Davis "... was unyielding in his insistence on independence as an absolute precondition of peace." This was made clear in the Hampton Roads peace conference in February 1865, which collapsed because Davis insisted on Confederate independence. Even if McClellan and Davis had been brought to a bargaining table, Freeman argues that there were at least two issues that would have almost certainly destroyed any moves for peace. First, there would have been the question of the status of the Border States, which the Confederacy would have insisted on their being allowed to join them. Aside from any emotional factors, Kentucky had resources that the Confederacy could not afford to lose and they would have wanted a border on and access to the Ohio River. The Union could not have surrendered Maryland without abandoning Washington DC. Any proposal for this would be opposed vigorously by powerful regional interests with the very real possibility of mass migrations of populations in these areas and guerrilla warfare with its associated lynchings and murders prevalent for years to come.

The second problem, which is even more intractable, would have been what was to be done with the former slaves who had either fled north or who were in territory occupied by Union forces. In particular what was to happen to those former slaves who served in the Union armies? These former slaves represented a huge financial loss to the slave owners, who would have sought, at least, compensation for their loss or possibly their return. Either demand would have provoked a political storm in the North with any attempt to return these former slaves being resisted, very possibly violently by the slaves themselves. Who was going to disarm the tens of thousands of black soldiers and send them south?

Freeman argues that that by 1864, a negotiated peace between both sides was virtually impossible since too much had already happened to change the two societies. Too much blood had been split and too much destruction had been wrought to make it possible for either side to be willing to compromise on the issue of Confederate independence.

Both the original article and the responses to the article in *North and South* are well worth a read!

Boys Will Be Boys!

Once, whilst reviewing a march past of troops, Abraham Lincoln were eying the reviewing stand somewhat strangely. He turned to discover his son, Tad, was mischievously waving a Confederate flag!

- Source: *North and South*, October 2006 issue.

An Army Marches on its Stomach!

James S Wadsworth, one of the richest men in America at the time of the Civil War, was a capable brigadier general of volunteers. He was known to have "roughed it" whilst in the field by having his meals cooked by the famous chef of the day, James Sanderson, who was the head chef of some of the most notable hotels in both New York and Philadelphia.

As a cadet at West Point, William Tecumseh Sherman was considered the best chef in his class. He cooked an excellent "hash" (a bread and potato mixture) over the fireplace in his room, an activity strictly forbidden by the rules of the Academy!

- Source: *North and South*, Vol 9, No. 5.

Famous Last Words

"Blow Gabriel, blow! My God, let him blow! I am ready to die!"

- Unknown Confederate soldier
At Appomattox, April 1865.

"In my latest writing and utterance, I repeat my unmitigated hatred to ... the vile Yankee race"

- Edmund Ruffin, June 17, 1865
prior to his committing suicide

"The war has made us a nation of great power and intelligence. We have but little to do to preserve peace, happiness and prosperity at home, and the respect of nations. Our experience should teach us the necessity of the first; our power secures the latter"

- Ulysses S Grant

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 by post to PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 2075 or by e-mail to secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

You Are Invited to - Our End of Year / Christmas Party

Our end-of-year / Christmas Party for Chapter members and their partners is to be held on **Friday, November 24** at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club**, Pacific Highway, Roseville, commencing from 6pm.

The **Timings** for this function are as follows:

6:00pm	Pre-dinner Drinks and AGM
6:30pm	Mezze Plates in the Function Room
7:30pm	Main Course Served
8:15pm	Coffee and Tea Served

The **Menu** for the evening will be:

Starters – Mezze Plates to Share – A Selection of Dips Marinated Olives and Cheeses

Main Course – Limited *a la carte* Selection of one of the following four Dishes:

Rump Steak with Chunky Chips and Salad.

Grilled Barramundi with Mashed Potato, Beans and Béarnaise Sauce.

Roast Pork with Potatoes, Steamed Vegetables and Spiced Apple Sauce.

Four Cheeses Spinach Ravioli with a Tomato Basil Sauce.

Drinks: Beer, Red and White Wines and Soft Drinks will be provided during both the pre-dinner drinks period and during dinner as part of the inclusive cost for the evening.

The **Cost** for the evening will be **\$35:00 per person**, all inclusive and there will be an exciting Christmas raffle with prizes to suit both Civil War enthusiasts and less-than-interested partners and friends.

Acceptances to the function should be forwarded to our **Secretary/Treasurer**, Brendan O'Connell, as soon as possible but **no later than Friday, November 17**. Whilst you may pay on the night of the function, for catering purposes we need to know prior to the night whether you are coming and to facilitate your acceptance an acceptance proforma is enclosed with this Newsletter for your use. Of course, notification of your acceptance commits you to paying for the function.