

Sumter to Appomattox

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

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Special Jubilee Edition

Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I can report the attendance at our first meeting for 2010 was the largest we have had for the last two years. With 23 members and guests attending to hear the Chapter's first Honorary Member, Len Traynor, speak on the subject of the evolution of service and gallantry medals, including the Medal of Honor, from Civil War times, we were given a rare treat. Thanks, Len! It is my firm hope that we have turned the corner with attendance at our meetings.

As will be seen from the adjoining paragraph, I have some good news and bad news to report. First the bad news, because the scheduled meeting date in April coincided with the ANZAC Day holiday on April 26, it was necessary to schedule a later date for our meeting. Unfortunately the following two Mondays were already booked and we have had to schedule our meeting for Monday, May 17.

The good news, however, more than compensates for this delay to our meeting program in that Bruce Dennett the professional historian, scholar and challenging speaker, who was scheduled to be the first speaker for 2010, has recovered sufficiently to accept our invitation to speak at the meeting. It is not often that we can give a guarantee, but if you are not completely satisfied with Bruce's presentation at this meeting, I will pay for your dinner and drinks for the night.

At our last meeting in February, members agreed that the collection of some 69 Civil War books donated by Mr Alec Dalgleish be sold to members and that the proceeds of these sales be used to purchase items of equipment, such as a data projector, for use in our meetings. The arrangements for this sale are yet to be finalised but will be available at the next meeting of the Chapter.

I hope to see you at our next meeting in May

Our Next Meeting

Our next regular meeting for 2010 will be held at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville** will be held on **Monday, May 17**. As is our custom, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start at 7:30pm.

As foreshadowed in the message to members in the adjoining column, this meeting is to be a very special one with the professional historian, scholar and challenging speaker, **Bruce Dennett** as our guest speaker.

Members who have heard Bruce speak previously at our meetings and conferences will attest to his knowledge and deep understanding of Civil War matters. Bruce's presentation might be a little controversial but you can be guaranteed a most interesting and entertaining experience. The title of his presentation is:

**Forget the North - the South, Helped
Along by Hollywood, Won the Civil War!**

Come prepared to have your thoughts challenged and have a great time!

As is our custom, we will be seeking to provide a paper bringing together the proceedings of the meeting. To this end we propose to record Bruce's presentation and develop a paper from this record of the meeting. Those of you who have seen Bruce in action, will understand that developing this written record is not going to be an easy task, but all we can do is try. What success we have in this regard will be sent to members with the next edition of our Newsletter.

Please make a special effort to come to this meeting and, if possible, bring a guest. You may be assured that the effort will be well worth it!

John Cook

It Happened in April

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

April 2, 1865 - Confederate general A P Hill is killed outside Petersburg, Virginia;

April 5, 1839 - Robert Smalls (USN), the only African American naval captain during the Civil War is born in Beaufort, S.C.;

April 15, 1865 - President Lincoln dies at 7:22am after being shot the previous night at Ford's Theatre by John Wilkes Booth;

April 22, 1861 - Robert E Lee is named commander of the forces of Virginia;

April 26, 1865 - John Wilkes Booth is shot and killed;

April 27, 1822 - Ulysses S Grant is born at Point Pleasant, Ohio.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

April 15, 1865 - Andrew Johnson sworn in as President after Lincoln's death;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

April 1, 1865 - At the Battle of Five Forks Lee's forces are defeated by the Union army, which now threatens his route of retreat;

April 3, 1865 - Federal troops occupy Richmond and Petersburg;

April 6, 1865 - The last major engagement between the Army of Northern Virginia (Lee) and Army of the Potomac (Grant) occurs at Saylor's Creek, Virginia;

April 8, 1864 - Nathaniel Banks' Federals "skedaddle" from Richard Taylor's Confederates at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads, LA;

April 11, 1861 - Confederate representatives visit Fort Sumter and demand its surrender

April 12, 1861 - Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor is fired on thus beginning the War;

April 13, 1861 - After 24 hours of bombardment, the Union Force within Fort Sumter is forced to surrender.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

April 2, 1865 - The Confederate government evacuates Richmond;

April 9, 1865 - Confederate General Robert E Lee surrenders to Union General Ulysses S Grant at Appomattox Court House;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS cont'd

April 17, 1861 - Virginia adopts an ordinance of secession;

April 17, 1865 - Joseph E Johnston surrenders to Sherman near Durham Station N.C.;

April 18, 1865 - Johnston and Sherman sign "a memorandum or basis of agreement" calling for an armistice by all armies in the field;

April 19, 1865 - Funeral services held for Lincoln;

April 21, 1865 - The train bearing Lincoln's body leaves Washington for Springfield, Illinois;

April 24, 1865 - President Johnson rejects the terms of agreement of Sherman and Johnston and directs that hostilities must resume if there is no surrender;

April 26, 1865 - General Johnston formally surrenders troops under his command to General Sherman.

This Could Be Good ...

A soon to be released book of 12 essays co-edited by the well known Civil War author and scholar, Gary W Gallagher is likely to provide perspectives on the War that has been largely ignored by military historians but will provoke debate and inspire fresh scholarship on the Civil War. The book is titled:

Wars within a War: Controversy and Conflict over the American Civil War

Comprising contributions from leading scholars, the book extends the discussion of controversies far past the death of the Confederacy in the spring of 1865 with contributions including, among other things, Walt Whitman's poetry, the handling of the Union and Confederate dead, the treatment of disabled and destitute Northern veterans, Grant's imposing tomb and Hollywood's long relationship with the Lost Cause narrative.

Reflecting a variety of approaches and methodologies, these essays provide a starting point for anyone interested in how Americans have argued the prosecution, meaning and memory of the War.

This book, which will be available through Amazon.com, is a "must-buy" for anyone who wishes to expand their understanding of America's Civil War.

Famous Last Words

"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

It Happened in May

Hatches and Dispatches

May 10, 1863 - Thomas J (Stonewall) Jackson dies at Guinea Station, Virginia, aged 39 years;

May 11, 1864 - JEB Stuart is mortally wounded at the Battle of Yellow Tavern, Virginia;

May 23, 1824 - Ambrose Burnside (USA) is born in Liberty, Indiana;

May 28, 1818 - Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard (CSA) is born in St Bernard, Louisiana;

Command Changes

May 2, 1863 - JEB Stuart assumes command of the Confederate cavalry after "Stonewall" Jackson is mortally wounded at Chancellorsville;

Battles

May 1, 1863 - Battle of Port Gibson, MS, which begins Grant's Vicksburg Campaign;

May 1 - 4, 1863 - Battle of Chancellorsville, that results in stunning Confederate victory for Lee's Army of Northern Virginia;

May 5, 1864 - Battle of the Wilderness begins;

May 8, 1864 - Fighting begins at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia;

May 12, 1864 - Battle of Bloody Angle, Spotsylvania;

May 12, 1865 - The last land battle between large forces resulting in a Confederate victory takes place at Palmito Ranch, Texas;

May 16, 1863 - Battle of Champion Hill, Mississippi;

May 17, 1863 - Battle of Big Black River Bridge, MS;

May 18, 1863 - Siege of Vicksburg, MS, begins;

May 19, 1863 - Grant launches his first unsuccessful attack against the besieged Vicksburg;

May 23 - 26, 1864 - Battle of North Anna, Virginia;

May 25, 1862 - Jackson attacks the Federals in the First Battle of Winchester, VA and captures the town two days later;

May 27, 1862 - Battle of Slash Church (Hanover Court House);

May 31, 1862 - Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) where General Joseph Johnston (CSA) is severely wounded.

Other Significant Events

May 4, 1865 - Lincoln is buried in Springfield, Illinois;

May 9, 1865 - The trial of the 8 accused Lincoln assassination conspirators begins;

March 4, 1865 - Lincoln is inaugurated for a second term as President;

May 10, 1865 - Jefferson Davis is captured near Irwinville, Georgia;

May 16, 1861 - Tennessee is officially admitted to the Confederacy

May 20, 1861 - North Carolina becomes the 11 th state to join the Confederacy whilst Kentucky issues a proclamation of neutrality;

May 29, 1865 - President Johnson grants amnesty and pardon to all who participated in "the existing rebellion", with a few exceptions.

A Balanced Assessment of Lincoln?

This assessment of the causes of the Civil War and of Lincoln was sent to us by Jenny Holder, one of our members from South Australia, and purports to be the views of a person with training in Law and Political Science. Jenny's comment on the statement is particularly interesting when she says " ... each to their own opinion ... there is, after all, freedom of speech ": One gets the feeling that Jenny does not agree with what is said.

" ... The American Civil War was about many issues, economic and political, yet slavery seems to overshadow all of them in any discussion about the causes of the war. It was a very brutal and foolish war that need not have occurred except for the pig-headedness of Lincoln and the Northern abolitionists. It was, also, an illegal war on the part of the Union; there is not a single word in the Constitution that prohibits secession, nor authorizes the use of military force to prevent a state from seceding. Lincoln and the Northern Unionists were pursuing a war of aggression against the southern States, pure and simple. Of course, that is always ignored in any discussion of the war and in all the history courses I have taken."

What do you think of what is asserted here in this statement about the War and Lincoln's part in it?

All responses to these views will be printed in subsequent issues of our Newsletter.

The Proposal to Commemorate the Sesquicentenary of the Civil War -

At our last meeting in February, John King, one of our members from Queensland presented a proposal for commemorating the sesquicentenary of the beginning of the American Civil War in April, 2011, involving the provision of a map for a wall in the National Maritime Museum as an addition of the present display of the *GSS Shenandoah*.

Members were provided, also, with a detailed written and pictorial version of the proposal at the February meeting. Any member who did not receive this detailed version of the proposal and would be interested in obtaining a copy of it should contact John Cook who will arrange a copy of the proposal to be sent to them. John can be contacted by 'phone on 9412 3214 or 043 777 000 6.

It is hoped that at the forthcoming meeting in May we might be able to have further discussion on this proposal. Such discussion might canvass issues such as the following:

- Should we be commemorating an event such as the **beginning** of the War?
- Would it be more appropriate for us to commemorate the **end** of the War?
- If it is accepted that we should be involved, what form and to what extent, financially, should this involvement be?
- Is it appropriate that the focus of our involvement be the *GSSA Shenandoah*?
- Is there something else that could be the focus of our involvement?
- Should we consider contacting the US Embassy in Canberra or the Consulate General in Sydney to ascertain if they have any plans for such a commemoration?
- Are the other aspects of any proposed commemoration of this sesquicentenary that need to be considered?

Members are asked to give some further thought to the issues relevant to the current proposal and any other options that might be considered for any such commemoration. Hopefully, we will then be able to have an informed discussion at our May meeting and establish a firm strategy to progress the proposal for commemorating the sesquicentenary of the Civil War.

More Famous Last Words ...

*"Come on boys! Give them the cold steel!
Who will follow me?"*

- General Lewis A Armistead
during Pickett's Charge,
Gettysburg July 3, 1863

Lincoln's Second Inaugural

Presented below, are three quotes from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address on March 4, 1864.

"Both sides read the same Bible and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any man should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. "

"Fondly do we hope - fervently do we pray - that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if goodwill that it continue ... so it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" "

"With malice toward none; with charity to all; with firmness in the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ; to bind up the nation's wounds ... so do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations. "

Whatever you think of Lincoln as a politician and President, you must agree that he was a brilliant wordsmith!

Inescapable Logic ...

"Reduction to poverty brings prayers for peace more surely and more quickly than does destruction of human life. "

General Philip H Sheridan

"Where Slavery is, there Liberty cannot be; and where Liberty is, there Slavery cannot be."

- Senator Charles Sumner
Massachusetts,
November 5, 1864

"We cannot change the hearts of those people of the South, but we can make war so terrible, make them so sick of war that generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it"

General William T Sherman, 1864

"They (Southerners) cannot be made to love us, but they can be made to fear us. "

General William T Sherman, 1864

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