

Sumter to Appomattox

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

No. 54, February 2011

Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

We completed 2010 on a high note with our end-of-Year / Christmas function at the end of November with around 20 guests attending. Paul Kensey wasn't real happy when he was breathalysed on the drive home as he had not taken into account the alcoholic content of the Christmas cake. Luckily for Paul, he was under the limit, but he tells me he was really worried taking the breath test! I would like to thank our Secretary / Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell, for his quiet but highly efficient work in making this function the success that it was. Thanks Brendan.

At this Christmas function we held a short AGM and I can advise that the new Executive and Committee are well into the planning for this year's activities. Details of the names of your Executive and Committee are presented later in this Newsletter. I would wish to thank these members for their willingness to work for the Chapter in this way during 2011.

Reflecting on 2010, I believe we can be well satisfied with our new arrangement of having fewer meetings, but focusing on quite outstanding speakers. The attendances at our meetings showed a marked increase from previous years and I must say having Bruce Dennett was a real "find" and the good news is that he has some ideas for future presentations. I think you will all agree that the great thing about Bruce is that he challenges us to think!

I was at the Test Cricket last month and ran into a long-standing member of the Chapter, Jennifer Kirkby, who advised that she has now finished her university studies and will be able to join us again of a Monday night for our regular meetings. Welcome back, Jen!

I look to 2011 to be another successful year for our Chapter of the ACWRTA and ask that each member seeks to support our activities with their presence at our meetings and input to our Committee on any initiatives that will make our activities more interesting and relevant to your needs.

Our Next Meeting

The first of our regular meetings for 2011 will be held at our normal venue - **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville** on **Monday, March 7**. As is our normal custom for our gatherings, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start at 7:30pm.

This meeting we propose to have something a little different with three of our members, including two of our Honorary Life Members, in a forum with the theme:

What Really Happened at Fort Pillow?

It is intended that **Paul Kensey** will provide an outline of the known "facts" of the battle. This will be followed by some comments on these "facts" by **Peter Zacharatos**, who, by the way, is studying this battle as part of a History project he is undertaking as part of his HSC studies. Peter will focus on his research where he has been particularly interested in the Confederate interpretations of the battle's outcomes. The presentation will conclude with a critique by **Bruce Dennett**, historian and teacher extraordinaire. You may not agree with everything that is said, but be assured you will have thought about the issues that are raised.

Whilst guarantees are not often given, in this case you may be assured of a great meeting. Indeed, the confidence held for the quality of this meeting is so high, that the Chairman will underwrite the cost of anyone's meal if they are dissatisfied with the night's proceeding

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.

John Cook

It Happened in February

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

February 3, 1807 – Joseph E Johnston (CSA) is born at “Cherry Grove”, Prince Edward County, Virginia;

February 6, 1833 – JEB Stuart (CSA) is born in Patrick County, Virginia;

February 8, 1820 – William Tecumseh Sherman (USA) is born in Lancaster, Ohio;

February 11, 1812 – Alexander Hamilton Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy is born in Wilkes (Taliaferro) County, Georgia;

February 12, 1809 – Abraham Lincoln, 16th US President is born in Hardin County, Kentucky.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

February 9, 1861 – Jefferson Davis is elected as provisional President of the Confederacy by the Confederate Provisional Congress;

February 9, 1865 – Lee appointed General-in-Chief of Confederate Armies;

February 18, 1861 – Davis is inaugurated as President of the Confederacy;

February 22, 1862 – Davis is sworn in as President of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

February 5, 1864 – Sherman’s Federals march into Jackson Mississippi en route to Meridian;

February 10, 1862 – The remainder of the “Mosquito” fleet is destroyed at Elizabeth City, NC;

February 14, 1864 – Sherman’s Union troops capture Meridian, Mississippi;

February 16, 1862 – Confederates surrender Fort Donelson, Tennessee, to Ulysses S Grant

February 17, 1865 – Columbia, SC, is captured and Charleston, SC, is evacuated;

February 18, 1865 – Charleston, SC, surrenders to Union troops under Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfennig;

February 24, 1862 – Federal troops under General Nathaniel Banks occupy Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

February 1, 1865 – Illinois is the first State to ratify the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery;

February 4, 1861 – First session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America is held in Montgomery, Alabama;

February 7, 1865 - Lincoln meets with the Confederate peace commissioners aboard the *River Queen* at Hampton Roads, Virginia;

February 19, 1862 - New Confederate Congress orders the release of 2,000 Federal POWs;

February 20, 1865 – The Confederate House of Representatives authorises use of slaves as soldiers;

February 23, 1861 – Texas voters approve secession by a wide margin;

February 25, 1862 – Federal War Department takes control of all telegraph lines to facilitate military movements;

February 26, 1863 – The Cherokee Indian National Council repeals the ordinance of secession, proclaims for the Union;

February 27, 1864 – Near Americus in Georgia, Federal Prisoners of War begin arriving at the unfinished Camp Sumter (Andersonville) prison camp.

Famous Last Words

“I don’t know if I am standing on my head or feet”

- Union General Joseph E Hooker,
June 1863

“... 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.

“Were the thing done over again, I would do as I did. Disappointments have not changed my convictions”

- Jefferson Davis, in his
post-war memoirs

Some people will never learn!

- Editor

Our 2011 Executive and Committee

As a result of the "elections" held at our Christmas function in November 2010, the following members of our Chapter will comprise the Executive and Committee for 2011:

Chairman ... John Cook
Secretary/Treasurer ... Brendan O'Connell
Program Director ... Bruce McLennan

Committee Members (7)

David Hain
Robin Haines
Angus Hordern
Geoff Kay
Tony Kovacevic
Maureen Morris
Peter Zacharatos (Jnr)

Congratulations to each of these members for their election and their willingness to serve for the Chapter. These Committee members should note that it might be necessary this year to schedule our Committee meetings differently to accommodate the HSC study program of Peter Zacharatos. I'm sure all of the Committee will understand the benefits we will gain from Peter's contribution will be more than worth this adjustment.

Annual Subscriptions

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell, has advised that the 2011 annual subscription for the NSW Chapter of ACWRTA is now overdue. The current rates are:

\$40 pa for members living in the Sydney Metropolitan Area, which includes a \$10 venue hire charge;

\$30 pa for all other members.

As has been our policy in previous years, payment of this subscription covers all members of the one family.

Members who have not received an account for this annual subscription or who have yet to pay the amount are asked to respond with payment to:

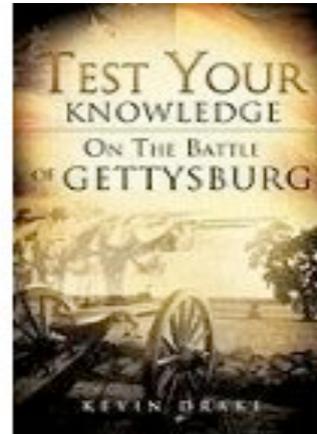
Brendan O'Connell
Secretary/Treasurer,
ACWRTA (NSW Chapter)
PO Box 200,
St Ives 2075,

This will facilitate the smooth and efficient conduct of our Chapter's activities for the coming year.

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

An Interesting Book...

For those who are interested in the Battle of Gettysburg, an interesting new book is now available through Amazon.com. Authored by Kevin Drake, this book is:



The book contains 158 pages of questions and answers on all aspects of the Battle and its participants on both sides of the conflict. Of particular interest is a series of "Who am I" questions which members might find intriguing. One of these questions is presented below.

Priced at \$US11:27 from Amazon, this is a really good buy, although Amazon charges an exorbitant \$9:00 postage and handling, but the current parity of the US and Australian dollars certainly mitigates the cost to us.

Who Am I?

I was born in Germany in 1829 and was educated at the University of Bonn where I started the paper "Bonner Zeitung" and was considered a revolutionary. I came to America where I settled first in Pennsylvania and then in Wisconsin. I spoke publically in support of Lincoln using German to raise his popularity amongst voter with a German background.

I was made Ambassador to Spain, where I was able to quietly dissuade Spain from supporting the Confederacy. At Gettysburg, I commanded a division under Oliver O Howard. My wife and her sister helped establish the Kindergarten system in America

Who Am I?

Answer: Carl Schurz

Celebrating the C.S.S. Shenandoah

A group of about 10 of our members attended at the National Maritime Museum on Sunday, January 30, to hear an interesting talk on the CSS Shenandoah by Sam Craighead of the Museum of the Confederacy. Barry Crompton of Melbourne spoke briefly before Sam and reminded the audience of Sydney's connection with the Shenandoah when it sailed under its original name of Sea King.. Afterwards our John King took the stage and presented a framed illustration of the Shenandoah in the Mersey River to the Maritime Museum. The pleasant afternoon concluded with a reception and light refreshments.

Thomas P Lowry

Some of our members will be familiar with the writings of the well-known Civil War author and amateur historian Thomas P Lowry.. In this article, some biographical details of this very interesting man are presented together with a review of one of his books.



Thomas P Lowry

Thomas Lowry is a product of northern California with its beaches and high Sierras. His high school studies were in East Bay, he spent his time plane spotting during World War II and spent seven years at Stanford University where he studied for his medical degrees. Starting in 1957, Lowry became a physician and psychiatrist in both California and New Mexico, where, in his own words he published "... several very dull medical books". In 1995, with his wife Beverly, he began reading the Civil War records of "misbehaviour" at the National Archives – these were like the tabloids of today only wilder!

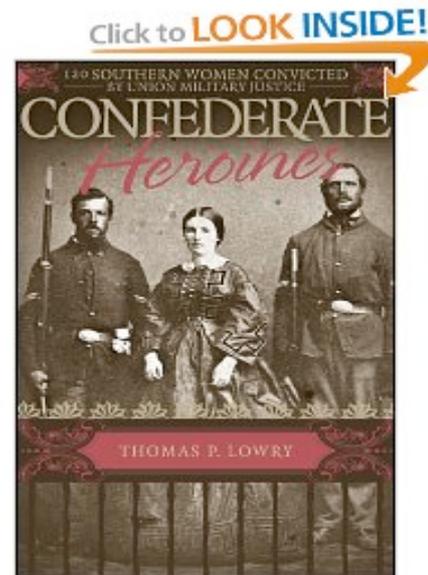
As you can see from the titles of books he has written, he doesn't "do" battles, famous generals or grand strategy. He focuses on "human interest stories (all true) of men terrified in combat, of women who miss their men in bed of corrupt politicians and of the surprising ubiquity of prostitution. He Makes the claim that "about my books... I don't think you'll find a boring one"!

One final comment, Jenny Holder one of the South Australian members of our Chapter, is a great friend of Lowry and a big fan, also!

A Review of a Lowry Book...

Although first published in 2006, Thomas Lowry's book, *Confederate Heroines* should be of interest to some of our members, particularly those who support strongly the Lost Cause mythology. Using freshly unearthed documentation, Lowry reveals that thousands of women were tried for crimes against the Union and presents some of their stories.

Amazon.com are offering the hard-cover edition of this book at \$US21:62 plus postage and handling. As can be seen from the image, below, scrutiny of the Amazon website www.amazon.com allows you to see the Table of Contents and a selection of pages throughout the book. This services is very worthwhile for those potential purchasers, particularly from overseas.



Lowry has certainly done his homework. After poring over some 75,000 federal court documents pertaining to Civil War-era military trials, he extrapolates the profiles of 120 women who were convicted of crimes against the U.S. army or government. Labelling all these women "heroines" is a bit of a stretch; however, as there were a few who were prostitutes, convicted of spreading venereal diseases among the Union troops. Nevertheless, the brief accounts describing smuggling, spying, and sabotage provide an alternative to the more familiar representation of passive Southern womanhood. Although somewhat lacking in analytical historical perspective, this study provides Civil War scholars and feminists with plenty of previously uncharted information and casual readers will enjoy some of the more remarkable exploits.

Members who purchase this or have read any of Lowry's other books might like to provide comment for other members. All comments will be published in later editions of this Newsletter.