

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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Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

The renewed life of the Chapter this year continued with our second meeting where Rev David Smith provided a most interesting insight into Robert E Lee. On behalf of those present I would wish to thank Father Dave formally for both his thorough research and passionate presentation. As an aside, don't you think that Dave's VMI coat added character and authenticity to his presentation!

As you will see from the adjoining column, I will be speaking at our next meeting in August on the topic of Military Intelligence during the Civil War. Although the term "military intelligence" was not used as we do today, both sides engaged in activities throughout the War that we now know as intelligence operations. Interestingly, the Confederacy established an Army Intelligence Office in 1862, which was commanded by one of their chaplains and was tasked to inform families of wounded Southern soldiers about their care and disposition. Please come to our next meeting to hear about this and many more interesting features of this aspect of warfare.

In the last two Newsletters, we have presented some interesting but sad news about the Civil War author and amateur historian, Thomas P Lowry. Lowry has been given a life ban from the National Archives research facilities after being charged with forging the date on a Civil War document thereby making the document of greater historical significance. Since that time, Lowry has prepared a written appeal of which we have been able to obtain a copy. Any member who would be interested in reading this appeal document is asked to contact me at the August meeting and I will provide a copy for study.

I look forward to seeing you at our August meeting

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

The next regular meeting for 2011 will be held at our usual venue - **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville on Monday, August 15**. As is the 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.

The topic for discussion at this meeting is one that is fascinating but has received little serious attention by historians until recently. John Cook will give a presentation titled:

Military Intelligence in the Civil War

Although over 50,000 books have been written about America's Civil War, little was known about this topic for almost a century after the end of the War, except for a number of memoirs written by former spies from both sides of the conflict. These were best described as "potboilers" and were characterised by being light on facts and riddled with hyperbole of the contributions of the authors with little or no reporting on the impact their activities had for the army commanders to whom they reported.

In 1958, a light was shone on this area of the War, with the late Edwin C Fishel discovering a vast amount of material in a hitherto undiscovered part of the National Archives. Much of what we now know about Civil War intelligence can be attributed to Fishel's pioneering work from that time.

As part of the presentation we will be considering a case study of one of the early campaigns of the War where intelligence played an important part in the success of one side and the lack of intelligence set the scene for disaster for the other side.

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 worthwhile.

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 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 3% 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.

May I Quote You General Lee...

" I tremble for my country when I hear of confidence expressed in me. I know too well my weakness, that our only hope is in God"
- Lee to his wife, 1862

" Conscious of my imperfections and the little claim I have to be classed among Christians, I know the temptations and trials I have to pass through. May God enable me to perform my duty and not suffer me to be tempted beyond my strength."
- Robert E Lee, 1861

"Colonel, when I lose my temper, don't let it make you angry."
- Lee to his military secretary

One for Paul Kensey...

Jenny Holder, one of our members from South Australia, has sent in a series of old photographs, one of which will be of particular interest to Paul Kensey. As some of you will know, Paul has a particular interest in the life and times of George Armstrong Custer and I'm sure he will be interested in the photograph, below, showing the sole survivor of Custer's command from the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn – the stallion, Comanche:



Thanks Jenny for providing these photographs, they really provide some interesting perspectives of 19th Century life.

A New DVD on Sale in August...

A new movie is to be released as a DVD by Amazon on August 16, will be of interest to Civil War enthusiasts and scholars. This movie follows the trial of Mary Surratt as participant in the Lincoln assassination plot and is likely to have some controversy associated with it in terms of its historical accuracy.



The movie is directed by Robert Redford and costs \$US16:99 + postage and handling. It is certainly worth a look.

Early Eye-in-the-Sky Intelligence

The American Civil War brought with it many "firsts" in modern warfare, including a primitive "eye-in-the-sky" technology, which is an integral part of modern military intelligence activities.

The photograph below shows one of the Federal observation balloons in May 1862. These balloons were used in the early part of the War, mainly by Union forces, to observe the enemy's strength, deployment and movements. The Union forces used this form of aerial reconnaissance during the Peninsula Campaign and the Seven Days Battles operating with at least seven balloons. The resource poor Confederacy could not compete with the industrial North in using this technology, although they did use a few balloons from June 1861 until the end of 1862. The most famous Confederate balloon was the so-called "Silk Balloon" built in Savannah, according to tradition from donated dresses by Southern Ladies. This balloon was transported to Richmond where it undertook daily missions during the Seven Days Battles until it was captured by Union forces on July 4, 1862.



Federal observation balloon being inflated, May, 1862

Despite the obvious advantages that the balloons offered for operations, their use came to an end in July 1863 – the Confederates simply could not afford the costs involved in maintaining them operationally and the Federals could not entice Professor Thaddeus Lowe (credited with establishing the Union Balloon Corps) to return to active service.

More detail of this aspect of Civil War technologies will be presented at the Chapter's next meeting.

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

The Missing Statue of Lincoln

Distinguished Civil War historian and the Chapter's first Honorary Life member, Len Traynor, has provided an interesting story of a "lost" statue of Abraham Lincoln that had been located in Sydney's Centennial Park from 1892 until the early 1970s.

This statue was of white marble, one of 31 statues installed in the Park in the late nineteenth Century and one of 11 statues acquired from the prominent Sydney stonemason, Job Hanson. The origin of these 11 statues is unclear because of records of their purchase are missing from the Colonial Secretary's correspondence files but it is suggested that they could have been purchased directly from Italy or carved at Hanson's yard in what is now Sydney's CBD.

This statue of Lincoln, which is shown below in the photograph from the files of the State Library, was removed from its location in the Park during the 1970s



because of its poor condition and vandalism. It has subsequently disappeared.

Of the original 31 statues in collection, 7 remain standing in the Park, one is currently being restored and two have been removed to known locations. This leaves 21 statues "missing in action".

The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust is keen to hear from anyone who has knowledge of the Lincoln statue and the other 20 statues from the original collection that are still missing.

Anyone with knowledge of these missing statues is asked to contact the Trust on (02) 9339 6699 or by e-mail at info@centennialparklands.co.au

Did you Know?

This is a "snippet" from our Program Director, Bruce McLennan who found that there was a large "Gettysburg Cyclorama" in a purpose built building in George Street presumably opposite Central Railway station. This attraction commenced in 1889 and ran for more than a decade.

In 1903, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (January 23) reported –

The soul-stirring Battle of Gettysburg

New Cinemagraph and all New Films

Amusing and Interesting

Open 10 am to 10 pm

Full Lectures at 5 and 8 pm with Music & all Effects

Explanations at short intervals all day

ADMISSION to all 1s Children 6d

An Interesting Description of Stonewall Jackson...

The Australian Army used to Study the American Civil War campaigns as part of its Military History studies and examinations for promotion to Major. In the *Australian Army Journal*, No. 56, January 1954, there is an interesting description of Thomas Jackson –

"In 1851 he resigned his commission to accept the appointment of Professor of Artillery and Natural Philosophy at the Virginia Military Institute... Neither teachers nor students at the Institute saw in the dry, quiet professor anything to suggest he would one day a renowned military commander. In a society noted for its gaiety, he was considered to be more than a little odd. Of a retiring, almost shy, disposition, he was unable to enter into the spirit of the numerous social functions of the Institute though he seldom failed to attend them. Many of his contemporaries felt that he carried his religious convictions to the point of fanaticism. Certainly he based his public and private actions, even the most trivial, on the principles of his faith. He devoted much of his spare time to the affairs of his church and, with his wife, conducted a Sunday school for poor negroes. Only a few of his close friends penetrated his austere reserve. The few who were admitted to his family circle found there an atmosphere of peace and joyous contentment."