

Sumter to Appomattox

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

Patron: Professor the Hon Bob Carr

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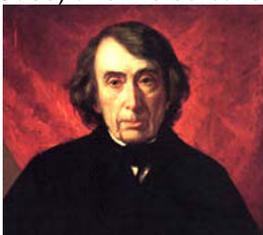
Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from Our Chairman

Our last meeting was a great success. We heard back from our members who had just returned from a tour of the Western Theater (*sic*) battlefields arranged for us by David Cooper. John Morrison's clear overview of the tour and some of their first-hand experiences brought that aspect of the War into focus.

A formal special members meeting is being held on 26 September to tidy up our constitution. This flows from the introduction of new standard rules for all NSW associations last year. We only need a quorum of five members to adopt these changes.

For our **next meeting** our member Dan Howard will address the topic "Lawyers at War: Lincoln, Taney and the Supreme Court". Roger B Taney was Chief Justice from 1835 until his death in 1864. The talk will compare and contrast Lincoln and Taney as lawyers, against the context of a succinct overview of Dred Scott's case, Habeas Corpus (the Merryman Case) and the so-called 'Prize Cases'.



Roger B Taney, Fifth Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court

I urge you all to go to our **Facebook** page and click "Going" to this "Event". By doing this, you will help publicise our event and attract new members. On our **Website** you will always find the date of our next meeting. Our Facebook page is also easily accessed from our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Bruce McLennan

Our Next Meeting ...

The next meeting of our NSW Chapter of the ACWRTA will be held at:

**The Roseville Memorial RSL Club
on Monday, Monday October 9.**

This meeting will involve a presentation from one of our newer members, **Dan Howard**, titled:

**Lawyers at War – Lincoln,
Taney and the Supreme Court**

In addition to this presentation, the regular *Show and Tell* component of our meetings will be in place and we invite you to bring any contributions you might have to enable you to participate in this part of our meeting.

Our Newsletter As Hardcopy ...

Members will have noted the recent shift in presentation of our Newsletter to it now being online through our website, rather than as a paper version. This was initiated as the request of some members and as a means of reducing the significant postal costs.

Notwithstanding having an e-mail address, a number of **members have requested a hardcopy version of the Newsletter**. Accordingly, it is proposed to retain the current method of distribution of the Newsletter, but make **a hardcopy version of the Newsletter available to members at the next regular meeting**. Any members wishing to avail themselves of this facility are asked to advise John Cook (Tel. 9412 3214) of their requirement before the next meeting.

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 Furner, slave and leader of the 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, 1861 – 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 the 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 the enlistment of Negro troops in the slave states of Maryland, Missouri and Tennessee;

October 10, 1862 – President Davis asks Virginia for a draft of 4500 Negroes to work on the completion of the fortification of Richmond;

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

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"

One War At a Time – Lincoln's Latin American Foreign Policy ...

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln instructed Thomas Corwin, U.S. Minister to Mexico, to do all that he could to combat the Confederate influence in Mexico. Despite being consumed by his own war, Lincoln realized that the American relationship with Latin America must be a repaired and improved.

A most interesting paper by Jason Silverman has been published by the President Lincoln Cottage organisation and is available through the following link:

<http://www.lincolncottage.org/one-war-at-a-time-abraham-lincolns-latin-american-foreign-policy/>

It Happened in November ...

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

November 3, 1816 – Jubal Early, (CSA), is born in Franklin County, Virginia;

November 5, 1818 – Soldier-politician, Benjamin Franklin Butler, (USA), is born in Deerfield, NH;

November 9, 1825 – A P (Ambrose Powell) Hill, (CSA), is born in Culpepper, Virginia;

November 13, 1814 – Joseph (Fighting Joe) Hooker is born in Hadley, Mass:

COMMAND APPOINTMENTS

November 1, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan succeeds retiring Lieutenant General Winfield Scott as general-in-chief of the Union armies;

November 2, 1861 – Major General John C Frémont is relieved of command of the Union's Western Department;

November 5, 1862 – President Lincoln relieves General McClellan of command of the Army of the Potomac replacing him with Ambrose Burnside;

November 10, 1862 – McClellan takes an emotional, spectacular farewell of the Army of the Potomac;

November 24, 1862 – Confederate General Joseph E Johnston is assigned to the major command in the West comprising six states;

November 30, 1863 – Gathering his defeated army in North-west Georgia, Braxton Bragg learns that his resignation has been accepted by President Davis.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

November 11, 1864 – Federals in Rome, Georgia, destroy bridges, foundries, warehouses of use to the enemy and proceed towards Atlanta;

November 16, 1864 – General Sherman and 60,000 Union troops leave a burned out Atlanta and begin their march to the Sea;

November 17, 1863 – The Confederate siege of Knoxville, Tennessee, gets underway and the partial siege of Chattanooga continues;

November 29, 1864 – In Tennessee, the Federal army, under command of John Schofield, withdraws under Hood's nose without suffering attack in the "Spring Hill Affair".

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

November 6, 1860 – Lincoln is elected President of the United States;

November 8, 1864 – Lincoln is re-elected as US President with Andrew Johnson of Tennessee as his Vice President;

November 12, 1861 – The Confederate blockade-runner *Fingal*, purchased in England, arrives in Savannah with military supplies;

November 15, 1861 – The YMCA organises the US Christian Commission for support to Federal soldiers;

November 19, 1863 – President Lincoln delivers the *Gettysburg Address* at the dedication ceremony for the new national cemetery at Gettysburg;

November 25, 1864 – Confederate agents set fire to a number of New York hotels and Barnum's Museum without causing significant damage;

November 26, 1861 – A convention at Wheeling adopts a constitution for a new state to be called West Virginia, created by secession from Virginia;

November 27, 1863 – General John Hunt Morgan and a number of his officers escape from the Ohio State Penitentiary and manage to reach Confederate territory;

November 28, 1861 – Southern Congress officially admits Missouri to the Confederate States of America.

A Contributor Comments ...

We have been corresponding with **LTCOL Steven Glazer, USA (Retd)**, (pictured below), who has authored contributions in our last two Newsletters (and has contributed another most interesting article in this edition of the Newsletter). Colonel Glazer is a member of the Abner Doubleday CWRT in central New York State.



He has appreciated receiving copies of our Newsletter, noting that it is interesting to get a different perspective of the groups. For example, our story of President Trump's comments on the Civil War (No. 83, p 6) is something his Round Table would never do, being deemed to be "too political" for some of their members. He does note, however, that he thought "...the piece to be quite apropos."

The First Shots of the Civil War

Submitted by Lt Col Steve Glazer, US Army (Retd)

It is conventional wisdom that the first shots fired by the South against the Union in the Civil War were at Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861, with the target being Fort Sumter. However, the State of New Jersey officially takes a different view.

On January 5, 1861, then-President James Buchanan dispatched the *Star of the West*, a commercial steamer commanded by U.S. Revenue Marine Captain John McGowan of Elizabeth, New Jersey, along with 200 regular troops and 90-days supplies, on a covert mission to relieve Fort Sumter.

News of the mission was leaked by Southern sympathizers in Washington, and an artillery battery on Morris Island at the mouth of the harbor was waiting for the appearance of the Union-flagged ship.



McGowan's steamship *Star of the West* being fired upon as it sails toward Fort Sumter, SC. (Frank Leslie Illustrated Newspaper)

As the sun rose on January 9, Citadel college cadets manning the battery spied the ship and repeatedly fired upon her, with several shots hitting the target, but with little damage.



Harper's Weekly Jan 26, 1861 edition: Firing on the *Star of the West* from the South Carolina Battery on Morris Island, SC.

Major Robert Anderson, commanding Fort Sumter, hesitated to return the South's fire (with his artillery officer and second in command, Captain Abner Doubleday, later expressing some regret for the hesitation). The relief ship being unarmed, and no fire support coming from the fort, Captain McGowan, with agreement of the army officers on board, aborted the mission and headed back to New York harbor.

That afternoon, South Carolina's newspapers heralded the first shots fired against the North, and in the days following it was front-page news across America. Upon McGowan's death in Elizabeth in 1891, his obituary, published throughout the nation, reported that he drew the first shots of the Civil War. And many 19th-century histories of the war were to the same effect.

In early 2011, a Joint Legislative Resolution was duly and lawfully adopted by New Jersey's legislature. It reads in part:

"... January 9, 2011, marks the solemn occasion of the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the first shots of the Civil War, drawn by Union County Captain John McGowan of Elizabeth...Through their service, Captain John McGowan and the soldiers aboard the Star of the West brought honor and pride to their country by fighting for the restoration of the Union and in the struggle for the causes of freedom and democracy upon which our nation was founded...This Legislature hereby acknowledges the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the first shots of the Civil War, and joins in paying tribute to the memory of Captain John McGowan and his troops

Some modern histories are in agreement with the state's legislature. However, most agree with Civil War historian James M. McPherson, who wrote in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Battle Cry of Freedom*, "These could have been the opening shots of a civil war. **But they were not - because Anderson did not fire back.**"(Emphasis added)

Finally, presented below, is the gravesite of Captain McGowan, who looks to have lived for another thirty years after this "skirmish":



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 of the Chapter by telephone on 0411745704 or by e-mail at: secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au