



Sumter to Appomattox

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

Patron: Professor the Hon. Bob Carr

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Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from Our Chairman

This newsletter is number 100. That is a notable milestone that reveals the endurance and resilience of our quirky group.

Congratulations and thanks are due to all those who have contributed and participated over the years of those 100 issues of the newsletter. Of particular note is John Cook's long service as newsletter editor. Thank you.

Whilst the COVID-19 situation is improving, we cannot meet as a group for the 1 June meeting.

Therefore, seven of us (the Committee) met for a "virtual dinner" to talk about what we can do as a substitute for our normal gatherings and meetings. The dinner was real, but the gathering was virtual. It worked well although practice in the use of internet-based systems always improves the experience so I am sure that people will be less likely to accidentally talk over each other in the future.

We are going to try a similar approach for our next dinner meeting on **1 June** (Meeting 100). We will use one of the internet meeting systems for a virtual dinner meeting. You will have to supply your own dinner and wine and we will put together a program looking at epidemics in the Civil War period. If you would like to participate in this grand experiment, please advise the email for your invitation to be sent. You will not need to download an app. The meeting will only require an internet connection and the ability to hit a link in an email.

Anyone interested in participating should contact John Morrison on 0411 197 935 or at (johnmorrison@bigpond.com)

Some other ideas were also adopted. We will include links to interesting presentations in the newsletter and also on Facebook and web pages.

- We will upload and feature letters from the Civil War read by our members on the Facebook page and on our web site. Many letters from the period are a fascinating insight into the lives and deaths of the people living the Civil War. Please let Dan Howard on secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au know if you have an example or are interested in participating. Please also submit questions likely to be of interest to members for investigation and response in the next newsletter.

Please get involved so that we keep our group connected and interacting even when we cannot gather together in our customary manner.

We hope that all members have been safe and well during the COVID-19 restrictions. It is not possible to know when we will again be able to meet in our familiar way. Until then, please stay connected and stay safe.

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

Best wishes

Dan McIntyre

Our Next Meeting

Epidemics (Infectious Disease) in the Civil War

Monday, 1st June

7.00 pm

By Zoom video conference (see Tips)

Our next meeting (which will be conducted remotely due to the current COVID-19 pandemic) will serve as a reminder that disease and infection was, up until the mid-20th Century, the chief cause of death in time of war.

The American Civil War was the first "modern war" in terms of technology and lethality of weapons. However, it was simultaneously fought at the end of the medical "Middle Ages". As is often widely recounted, approximately three in five Union casualties and two in three Confederate casualties died of disease:

- **Union:** 110,100 killed in action; 224,580 disease deaths; 30,192 who died as POWs
- **Confederacy:** 94,000 killed in action; 164,000 disease deaths; 31,000 who died as POWs.

In the mid-nineteenth century the causes of disease were largely unknown. Often even a minor wound or injury could easily become infected and prove fatal. The American Civil War was the last large-scale conflict fought without knowledge of - or general acceptance of - the germ theory of disease. Generally unsound hygiene, dietary deficiencies, and treatment of battle wounds without even basic sterile or hygiene techniques set the stage for epidemic infection.

Inadequate information about disease causation was a huge impediment to disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment. The predominant illnesses of the Civil War were pneumonia, typhoid, diarrhoea/dysentery and malaria. Approximately two-thirds of the 660,000 deaths of soldiers were caused by uncontrolled infectious diseases.

Epidemics played a major role in slowing or even halting several major campaigns. Coming as they did at a crucial point early in the war, it can be argued that they prolonged the fighting by as much as 2 years.

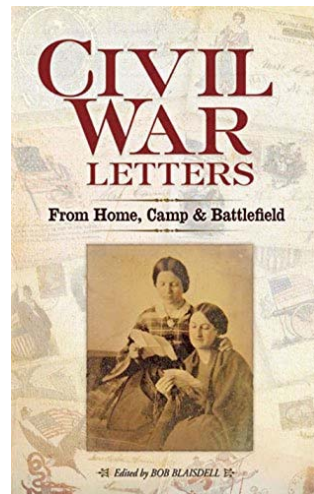
This publication is the official newsletter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia (NSW Chapter). All inquiries regarding the newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary of the Chapter by telephone on 0411 745 704 or by email to: secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

Tips to improve your video call

- You will receive a meeting code number
- Check mic and camera working
- Light from a lamp on your face
- Avoid lights, white walls behind you
- Don't point camera at the ceiling
- Sit close to camera to improve sound
- Let others finish speaking

Our New Slot

Call for Volunteers to Record Letter Readings



Civil War Letters: From Home, Camp and Battlefield -An Anthology compiled by Bob Blaisdell (2012) Dover Publications.

During the current period when we are unable to hold our usual meetings, we plan to upload on to our website from time to time recordings by members of letter readings from this excellent anthology of Civil War Letters. They are mostly fairly short and can be read aloud in 10 minutes or so. Our Secretary, Dan Howard, has kicked off and recorded two letters, one from a Confederate Private from Baltimore explaining to his mother why he joined the Confederate Army on the eve of the battle of Bull Run, the other from Stonewall Jackson to his wife Mary after that battle, that also contains a short addendum by Mary.

The book can be downloaded onto Kindle from about \$15.00.

Any member who would like to record a reading please contact Dan at secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

Listen to two letters read by Dan Howard via the link on our website **Click** on "[Readings - letters from home, camp and battlefield](#)" on our website.

With thanks to Dan

Our Last Meeting

REFIGHTING CHICKAMAUGA

*At our meeting in February 2020, our new treasurer, **Wayne Morrison**, gave a short presentation on the Battle of Chickamauga and reintroduced us to his hobby of wargaming.*

The Historical battle

In September 1863, after his successful Tullahoma Campaign, the Union Army of the Cumberland under General Rosecrans renewed the offensive and aimed to force the Confederates out of Chattanooga. In early September, Rosecrans consolidated his forces scattered in Tennessee and Georgia and forced General Bragg's Confederate Army of the Tennessee out of Chattanooga and headed south. The Union troops followed it and brushed with it at Davis's Cross Roads. Bragg was determined to reoccupy Chattanooga and decided to meet a part of Rosecrans's army, defeat it, and then move back into the city. On September 17 he headed north, intending to attack the isolated Union XXI Corps. As Bragg marched north on September 18, his cavalry and infantry fought with Union cavalry and mounted infantry.

By the evening of the 18th September, Bragg's Army consisting of four Corps (Buckner, Hood, Polk and Walker) and faced Rosecrans's Union Army (Crittenden, Thomas and McCook).

The First Day (Northern Front)

Bragg's plan on the 19th September 1863 was for an attack on what he believed to be the Union left flank by Buckner, Hood and Walker. Bragg had observed the advance of the Confederates and Thomas and McCook reinforced Crittenden.

On the Northern end of the Battlefield, the Confederates attempted to outflank the Union position and turn the Union army. The Confederates comprised Forrest's dismounted cavalry, Pegram's* and Liddell's infantry divisions and Polk's Corps, consisting of Cheatham's division.

The Union under Thomas comprised the divisions of Baird, Brannan and Reynolds.

There was bitter fighting on the northern front but by the end of the day, the Confederates had failed to turn the union flank.

** See pages. 6-7 for a story in which General John Pegram coincidentally and sadly features.*

The rest of the battle

The battle in the south see-sawed on the first day with the Confederates in a better position. The overall losses on the first day are estimated at between 6,000-9,000 Confederates and 7,000 Union.

On the second day, the Confederates resumed the attack. The Confederates had received reinforcements and the Union forces had been weakened by the first day's fighting.

The Confederates achieved breakthroughs on the Southern front, which led to the rout of the Union forces as the army collapsed.

The battle was damaging to both sides in proportions roughly equal to the size of the armies: Union losses were 16,170 (1,657 killed, 9,756 wounded, and 4,757 captured or missing), Confederate losses were 18,454 (2,312 killed, 14,674 wounded, and 1,468 captured or missing). They were the highest losses of any battle in the Western Theater during the war and, after Gettysburg, the second-highest of the war overall.

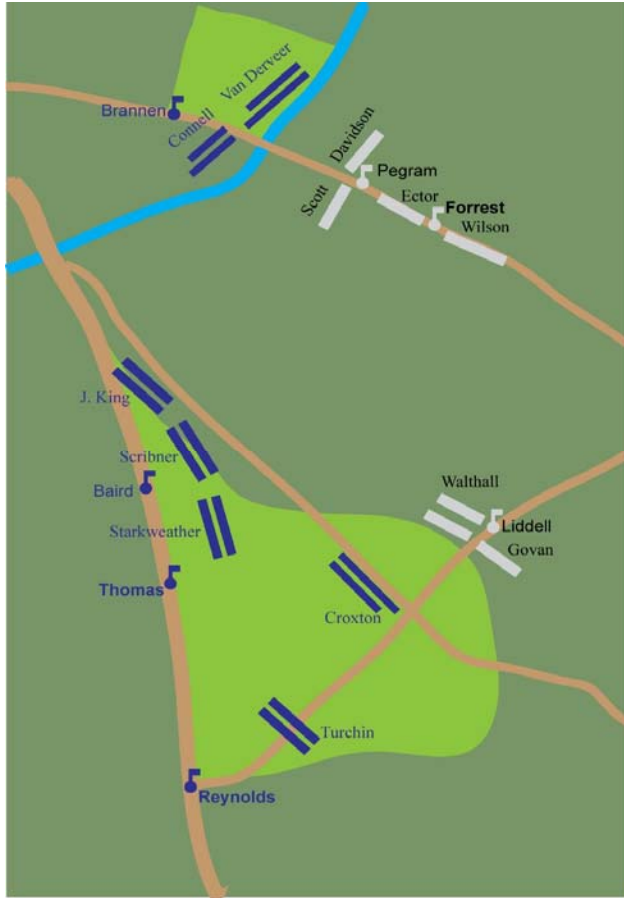
The 2020 Refight

The intention is to refight the Northern front in March 2020 using miniature figurines on a tabletop, using a set of wargaming rules. Wayne has previously presented to the club on wargaming, which is the recreation in miniature of warfare using metal figurines (18mm size) with detailed rules that scale down movement and firing ranges to a table tennis sized table. Rules take into account the firing effectiveness of the various period weapons and the effects of casualties on the morale of troops. Players make decisions about how and where to attack and when and how to defend.

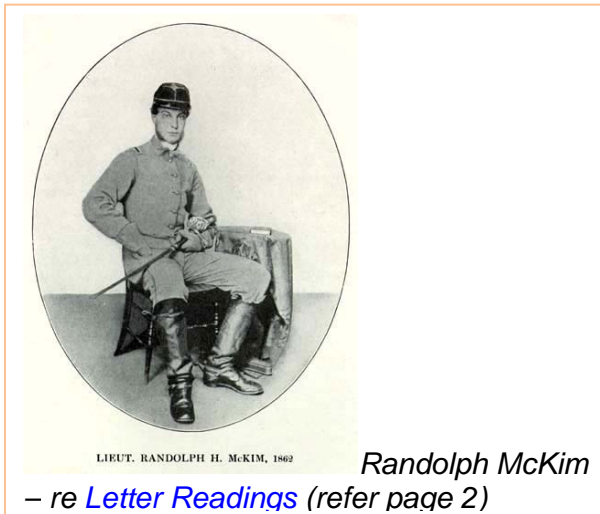


Some of the Union troops who were to be fighting at Chickamauga in March 2020

Wayne has been given the role of Union commander and the battlefield terrain is as follows:



The ground is flat. The light green area is clear terrain while the rest of the battlefield is wooded, which has effects on movement, line of sight and combat. The confederates must cross the road on the left-hand side. There was a general discussion as Wayne sought the membership's collective military advice on what to do. The result of the battle will be reported at the next meeting.



Civil War Profile

With thanks to Dan Howard

JOHNNY CLEM

'The Drummer boy of Chickamauga'



Sometimes known by the nickname 'Johnny Shiloh' for his steady courage under fire when his drum was hit by shrapnel in that battle and he was knocked unconscious, John Lincoln Clem, traditionally the youngest person ever to serve in the Civil War at the ripe old age of 9, in all probability was not even present at the battle of Shiloh as the regiment he is known to have served in, the 22nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry, was not formed until four months after the battle! However, young Clem claimed he had tried to join the 3rd Ohio Infantry but had been rejected due to his age. Some hazy sources suggest he may at some time have attached himself to the 24th Ohio Infantry (in which case he could indeed have been at Shiloh) but there are no hard records to confirm this and the truth has been lost to history (despite the efforts of Walt Disney, who produced a dramatization of 'Johnny Shiloh' in 1963, starring Kevin Corcoran. Nostalgic baby boomers can see the you tube clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5fIF2oQd5o>

Clem himself appears not to have published any memoir. Indeed, there are surprisingly few reliable historical sources about Clem's youth, and the scanty historical records of his childhood Civil War exploits constitute a perplexing hash of fact, tall-tale and legend, so it is very difficult to separate out the truth from the fiction. There was a popular 1862 song written by William S Hayes called 'The Drummer Boy of Shiloh' and it is very likely that many drummer boys were likened to the hero of the tune by their own regiments, given that drummer boys also served a function akin to being a regimental mascot (as well as performing many errands about camp besides drumming, such as fetching water, cleaning, giving haircuts and the like). It is very easy to imagine how a popular song in those days might morph into the accepted narrative of a young boy's life, and how that might, through the mists of time, become part of his legacy. Here is the song's mournful second verse (you can hear the whole song on you tube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRdmiWfyIKU>

*"Look down upon the battlefield,
Oh Thou, Our Heavenly Friend,
Have mercy on our sinful souls."
The soldiers cried, "Amen."
There gathered 'round a little group,
Each brave man knelt and cried,
They listened to the drummer boy,
Who prayed before he died."*

Furthermore, some sources suggest that as a child, like many other children, Clem may have had a tendency to stretch the truth about his background somewhat, perhaps a function of the fact that he apparently ran away from home in Newark, Ohio, after his mother had died and he may have had little opportunity for parental guidance!

What is clear, however, is that Clem got into his young head very early in the war that he wanted to serve and also that he managed to attach himself as something of a 'tag-along' camp-follower to the 22nd Michigan Infantry regiment, who eventually took him in and trained him as a drummer boy. It appears that officers of the regiment pitched in to provide a small wage for him until he was allowed to formally enlist in May 1863, when he was only 11 years old – traditionally the youngest enlisted person in either army. It also appears that he was provided with a shortened longarm, so that he could manage its weight if it became necessary for him to fight.

There is no doubt that Clem was present with the 22nd Michigan at the battle of Chickamauga and there is a traditional account that, during the Union retreat in one phase of that battle, Clem was chased by a mounted Confederate Colonel who ordered him to surrender and yelled at him words to the effect of "damn little Yankee devil!" It is said that, rather than surrender, Clem raised his gun and shot the Colonel. Some accounts say that the Confederate was killed, others say he was only wounded. No accounts on either side give the name of the Confederate Colonel – a surprising omission which, again, muddies the historical waters. However, Clem should be given the benefit of the doubt that he did indeed perform such an act of bravery as, on account of his action, he was promoted to Sergeant, becoming the youngest non-commissioned officer in the history of the US Army. He became popularly known as 'the drummer boy of Chickamauga' and famous through the press of the day.



Clem in the 1870's



and in 1922

Clem's history thereafter is more reliably recorded. He was attached to the Army of the Cumberland as a mounted orderly. He was present at Perryville, Murfreesboro, Kennesaw and Atlanta, where he was twice wounded. He was at one point captured by Confederate Cavalrymen whilst serving as a train guard in Georgia in 1863, and had his small uniform confiscated, including his forage cap that had three bullet holes in it, of which he was very

proud and thus most irate about losing. He was fortunately part of a prisoner exchange soon thereafter but the Confederate press, aware of Clem's fame, used the story as propaganda to taunt the North for allowing such young children to serve, writing "What sore straits the Yankees are driven, when they have to send their babies out to fight us."

Clem was discharged from the Army in 1864 at age 13 and went to high school. In 1871 he joined the National Guard and was elected Captain of the Washington Rifles. Nominated for West Point by President Grant himself, Clem attempted the West Point entrance examinations twice but was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, in December 1871, Grant appointed Clem a second lieutenant in the 24th US Infantry. Clem thereafter had a long and distinguished army career, rising to the rank of full Colonel in 1903, serving in the Quartermaster Department for many years, including at various postings during the Spanish-American War. He reached the mandatory retirement age of 64 on 13 August, 1915, and was promoted to Brigadier General on his retirement. At the time of his retirement, Clem was the last veteran of the Civil War still serving in the US armed forces. In 1916, he was promoted on the retired list to Major General.

Clem died in San Antonio, Texas, in 1937, aged 85 years. He married in 1875 and, after the death of his wife, he remarried, in 1903, the daughter of a Confederate veteran, leading him to claim that he was the 'most united American alive'. He fathered three children.

Clem is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Snippets

With thanks to contributors

Joe Davis 1858 - 1864

On 30th April 1864, the Confederate President's son was playing with other children on the balcony of the Executive Mansion in Richmond when his mother left to have lunch with her husband and left the children under the care of the family nurse.

Notwithstanding her presence, young Joe climbed onto the balcony railing, overbalanced and fell into the garden below, striking his head on a brick wall. His parents rushed to his aid but, sadly, the young boy died within minutes and his family was plunged into grief and mourning.

His devastated father, still having to attend to the affairs of state, also had to attempt to form strategies to counter the Union advances on all fronts, especially Sherman's campaign against Atlanta, one of the South's important manufacturing centres and a vital source of materials for the southern war effort.

Hetty Cary 1836 – 1892



This beautiful, dazzling, redheaded woman, claimed by many to be most outstanding beauty of the day, was the darling of the Richmond social circle during the Civil War, and holds the sad distinction of being a radiant bride one day and widow in mourning three weeks later.

Born in Baltimore into a highly-regarded and well-connected Virginian family, she was a very strong supporter of secession. Her outspoken comments in this regard drew the attention of the occupying Federal forces, which forced her to flee the city when she was threatened with arrest and imprisonment.

She, her sister and their cousin Constance - all equally beautiful - moved to Richmond where they were embraced by the social elite, becoming very popular. Hetty involved herself in social and political work and became the centre of admiration from leading military figures, with many seeking her hand.

One of General Lee's division commanders, General John Pegram, was the lucky man, their marriage taking place at St. Paul's

Cathedral on the 19th January 1865, an event deemed one of the few bright spots in the cold, dismal Confederate winter.

She and her husband made their home at his headquarters with the lines defending Petersburg, where she became a great favourite of the troops. Sadly, Pegram was shot through the heart during the battle of Hatcher's Run on the 5th February 1865.

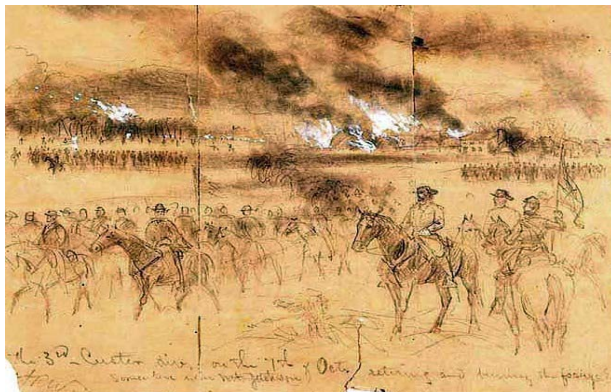
Nobody had the courage to inform Hetty and she did not know of his death until she was asked to identify his body.

Exactly three weeks after their nuptials, his funeral was held in the very same church where they had previously exchanged their wedding vows.

Returning to Baltimore after the war, the Federal authorities had not forgotten her strong political views and she was arrested and imprisoned. General Grant ordered her immediate release along with a sincere apology.

She later toured Europe, began a teaching career and eventually remarried in 1879.

Alfred R. Waud 1828 – 1891



Alfred Waud was, without doubt, the most prolific and brilliant war artist of the Civil War. Attached to the Army of the Potomac, he covered their campaigns from its inception until the end of the war.

Born in England, Waud (pronounced *Wode*), moved to the United States in 1850 after graduating from the Royal School of Art and Design. He secured employment as a Special Artist with the New York Illustrated News, staying with them during the early stages of the conflict and then transferring to the Harper's Weekly in February 1862.

His beautifully-drawn and precise detailed drawing were often done under fire as he

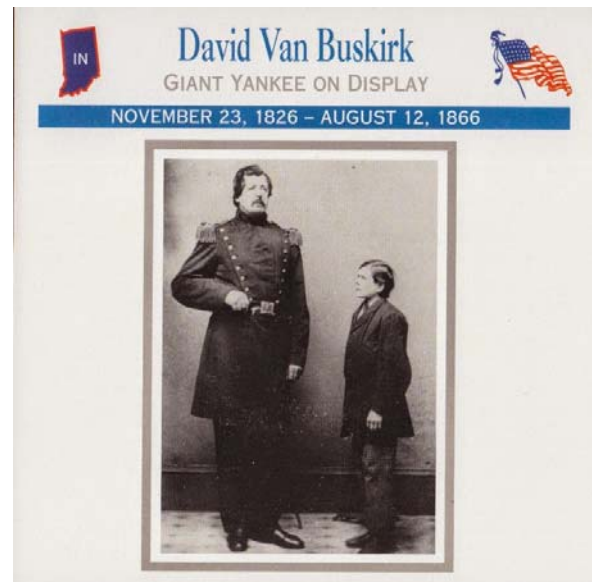
risked life and limb to get closer to the action so as to obtain a better view of the battles.

Post-war, many of Waud's sketches appeared in Century Magazine's extensive Civil War series and his renditions can also be seen in the four-volume work *Battles and Leaders*.

Waud continued working for Harper's until the end of his life, drawing scenes picturing the South and the Wild West. He is buried in Marietta, Georgia.

The Library of Congress holds nearly 2,500 sketches by Waud and his brother, William, who was also a war artist of great talent.

David Van Buskirk 1826 – 1886



Standing 6'10½" tall, he was reputed to be the tallest man in the Union Army during the Civil War.

In June of 1861, Buskirk, an Indiana farmer, joined forces with a very tall friend, Peter Kopp, previously in the French Army, to raise a company of volunteers in response to Lincoln's call to war. Men at least 5'10" were wanted to form a company of volunteers in response to Lincoln's call to war.

Over 100 men filled the requirements and became Company F of the 27th Regiment of Indiana Volunteers. All were mustered into Federal service in September 1861 and Buskirk was elected 2nd Lieutenant.

With the regiment, he fought in various battles until he was captured during Stonewall Jackson's Shenandoah Valley campaign March-June 1862.

Sent to Richmond, he was confined in Libby Prison, where his great height and weight

(380lbs) made him an object of great curiosity to both his fellow prisoners and Rebel guards. Even the Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, was motivated by curiosity to view this unusual captive. Buskirk's unique size even caused the prison authorities to issue a bigger serve of rations to him.

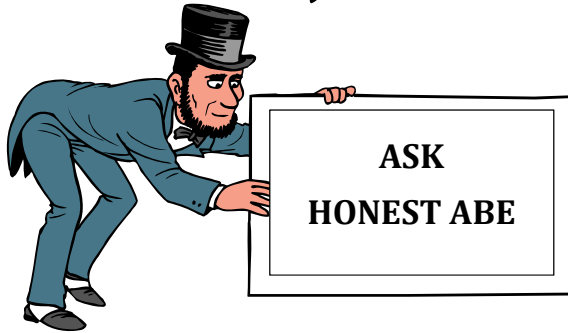
Exchanged in September 1862, he re-joined his regiment and was promoted to Captain. He fought in the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. He was then sent to New York to combat the draft riots occurring in that city.

A short time later, the regiment was sent to the Western Theatre and took part in the Chattanooga campaign. Suffering very badly from rheumatism, Buskirk resigned on the 20th of April 1864 and returned to farming.

The world-famous showman, P.T. Barnum, made a generous offer to Buskirk to join his exhibition of freaks at his museum in New York. But Buskirk firmly rejected the offer, becoming weary of being an object of curiosity.

Apart from farming, he spent the rest of his life serving as minor political office holder.

Our New Segment



Send your questions to
secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

Question

**Dear Honest Abe,
Can you tell me who, in your opinion, was
the worst general in the Union Army?
Yours truly,
Ambrose**

Reply

Dear Ambrose,

Funny you should ask that. I reckon it all depend on who you ask. But since you've asked me, I'm happy to oblige.

Some generals got a bad name when they didn't really deserve it. Others had stellar reputations that they didn't deserve either. There were no fewer than 583 generals in my Union army all up, so there's plenty to choose from! The best approach I can suggest is to give you a starting point of three of the worst Union generals I ever knew. They, like me, are all gone now anyway so they won't be taking me to court for slander!

George B McClellan – the fellow was a grumbler who was too cocky and had the worst case of 'the slows' I ever knew.

Ambrose Burnside – an incomparable ditherer with no tactical skill whatsoever, who needlessly threw countless brave soldiers' lives away at Antietam and Fredericksburg. He is chiefly remembered to posterity for the bridge named after him where those sacrifices were made, and for his outlandish bushy whiskers which became known as 'sideburns'!

Benjamin Butler – the general –was politically savvy, but a hopeless soldier. His administration as military governor in New Orleans was disreputable, lacking honesty and integrity. In fact, southerners there made chamber pots with his image etched into the bowl – enough said!

Yours faithfully,

Abe

Send in your questions!

Civil War Books for Sale

Gunfire around the Gulf – The last major naval campaigns of the Civil War, Jack D Coombe, Bantam Books, pp 237 – “While the soil ran red with blood at places like Gettysburg, Shiloh, and Antietam, it was the lesser-known naval battles for control of the Gulf of Mexico - the lifeline of supplies and weapons to the Confederacy – that would determine the outcome of the Civil War. ...” only \$10

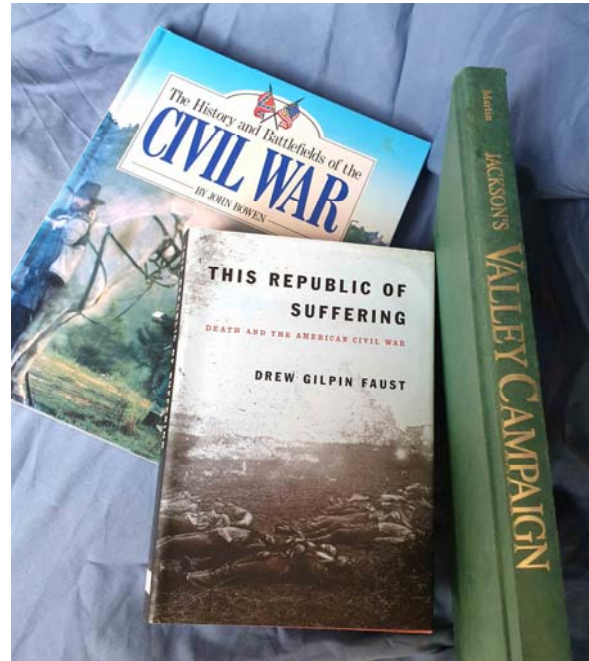
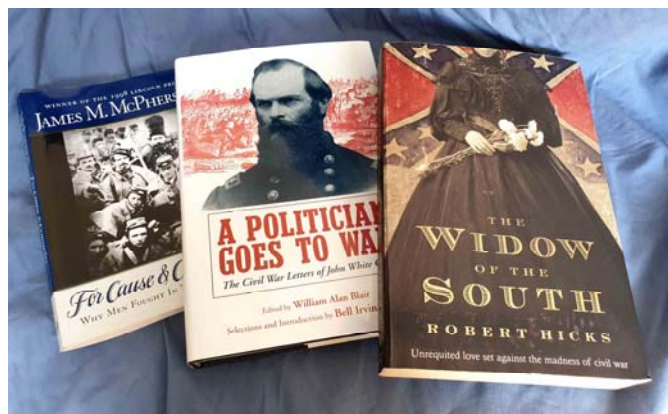
The History and Battlefields of the Civil War, John Bowen, Wellfelt Press, pp351 – large coffee table book – includes color pages, detailed accounts of everyday lives of ordinary soldiers and civilians, Lively discussion of the important social and military themes ... Large book - only \$20

The Seven Days – The emergence of Lee, Clifford Dowdey, University of Nebraska Press, pp 380. “Dowdy brings to an encyclopaedic knowledge of the facts a freshness that makes the story seem new ...” \$10

War on Two Fronts – Shiloh to Gettysburg, John Cannan (ed), Combined Books Inc, pp413 – A dramatic selection of personal narratives contrasts the search for a decisive battle in the East with the protracted war of maneuver, sieges and raids in the West. \$10

One of Jackson’s Foot Cavalry, John H Worsham, Bantam Books, pp338 – Remarkable memoir by an enlisted man under Stonewall Jackson – details the life of the common soldier of the Confederacy. Lead by their brilliant, eccentric, and inspired commander, the soldiers who served under Jackson were often asked to do the impossible... only \$5

The Widow of the South – Unrequited love set against the madness of the civil war, Robert Hicks, Bantam Press, pp432 “A sustained, profound meditation on what it means to live, and to die. Robert Hicks has written a moving and magnificent novel” ... Large book \$10



A Politician goes to War – The Civil War letters of John White Geary, William Alan Blair (ed), Pennsylvania State University Press, pp 259, hardback .. The letters of John White Geary constitute a significant addition to the printed primary literature of the Civil War. The illuminate Geary’s role as a general officer who served in both major theaters of the conflict ... \$10

For Causes & Comrades – Why Men Fought in the Civil War, James M McPherson, Oxford University Press, pp237. Why did the soldiers – Confederate and Union – risk their lives, through countless bloody battles and four long, awful years. Draws on more than 25,000 uncensored letters and nearly 250 private diaries from men on both sides. \$15

Jackson's Valley Campaign – November 1861-June 1862, David G Martin, Gallery Books, pp184 (some markings) ... Stonewall Jackson was already well on the way to becoming a legend when he arrived in Winchester, the principal town of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, on 5 November 1861 to assume command of Virginia's Valley District. ... Stonewall's military exploits over the next two years were to be extraordinary as he showed the genius that ranks him among the greatest generals of the Civil War. Large book \$20

This Republic of Suffering – Death and the American Civil War, Drew Gilpin Faust, Pub: Alfred A Knopf, pp346 ... During the war, approximately 620,000 soldiers lost their lives. An equivalent proportion of today's population would be six million. This book explores the impact of this enormous death toll from every angle: material, political, intellectual, and spiritual. The author delineates the ways death changed not only individual lives but the life of the nation and its understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. ... \$10

The Complete Text of the Bestselling Narrative History of the Civil War – Based on the Celebrated PBS Television Series The Civil War, Geoffrey Ward with Ric Burns and Ken Burns, Vintage, pp 348 ... Between 1861 and 1865, Americans made war on each other and killed each other in great numbers – if only to become the kind of country that could no longer conceive of how that was possible. What began as a bitter dispute over Union and States' Rights, ended as a struggle over the meaning of freedom in America. At Gettysburg in 1863, Abraham Lincoln said perhaps more than he knew: The war was about a “new birth of freedom”. \$10



Something for
lock-down!

BOOKS for SALE

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The Last Full Measure – a novel, Jeff Shaara, Ballantine, pp 560 ... This book tells the epic story of the events following the Battle of Gettysburg and brings to life the final two years of the Civil War. Jeff Shaara dramatizes the escalating confrontation between Robert E Lee and Ulysses S Grant – complicated, heroic, and deeply troubled men.

The Lincoln Assassination – Crime & Punishment, Myth & Memory, Harold Holzer, Craig L Symonds & Frank J Williams (eds), Fordham University Press, pp259 ... These essays offer concise versions of the latest and best scholarship on the Lincoln assassination and the trials of the conspirators, written by the foremost historians of these events. \$10

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