

# Sumter to Appomattox



American Civil War Round Table of Australia (New South Wales Chapter)

[www.americancivilwar.asn.au](http://www.americancivilwar.asn.au)

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

Number 102 Sept.-Oct. 2020

## Chairman's message

Dear Friends,

I was desperately hoping that our meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 would be in-person and face-to-face. However, it was not to be.

We will meet by way of Zoom again as we did last time. We are in danger of becoming adept at Zoom meetings, which is a pity.

Having said that, I am pleased that our last meeting was rather good with two excellent presentations from Peter Zacharatos and Wayne Morrison. Thank you and accolades to them both. John (the other Morrison), as Program Director, has lined up another program that sounds very interesting as well.

Please do not hold back from cross-room chatter during the meeting. A bit of Zoom chaos is good, and I can always mute everyone if it gets desperate.

Please consider volunteering for a presentation topic of your choice. We are compiling a list for next year. It can either be our regular ten-minute spot devoted to a particular battle or a particular person, or it can be a longer 20 to 30-minute presentation on a broader topic. We have a list of topics for which you can volunteer to research and, if you wish, present. Remember that presenters are among friends when presenting. We are a sympathetic and supportive audience. It is not on national television.

Please also consider introducing a friend to our group, even though we are only on screen.

Also, please save our Treasurer Wayne Morrison from angst and high blood pressure by paying the annual subscription as soon as you can. Treasurers are funny that way. They get all twitchy when waiting for money to arrive. *cont. p.2.*

## Our Next Meeting

Please join us for dinner – by Zoom

**Monday, September 21st  
6.30 for 7.00 pm**

## Women in the Civil War

According to Stephanie McCurry, Professor of History at Columbia University in her book, *Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War*, "women are never just witness to war." Also: "if we think of the history of war as the history of human beings in war then we will need the version with the women still in it."

She argues that women don't just watch history from the sidelines; they make it, they act in it, they are very much part of it. To see women as innocent wallflowers in need of protection could prove a deadly mistake when women were serving as smugglers, scouts, decoys, insurgents, combatants, and activists. We ignore them and their contribution at our peril.

Consider the fact that by the end of the war almost 200 women were tried by military commissions for breaking the law. Or the almost 20,000 women who worked in hospitals as nurses and in many other capacities. Or the women who worked in factories, farms, and offices. These were only a fraction of women directly involved in the war at so many levels.

At our next meeting, Peter Headley will look at this often-neglected area of Civil War history.

Members will receive a separate invitation to [register](#) to attend. Registration is required.

**President's message** (cont. from p. 1)

As I mentioned last time, I hope that none of you has had to deal directly with COVID-19 but, if that is not the case, please send an email on [president@americancivilwar.asn.au](mailto:president@americancivilwar.asn.au) to let me know. Also, as I said last time, we are before anything else a group of friends with a quirky common interest.

Please stay connected and stay safe.

Anyone interested in participating should contact John Morrison on 0411 197 935 or at [johnjmorrison@bigpond.com](mailto:johnjmorrison@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.

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](http://www.americancivilwar.asn.au)

Best wishes.

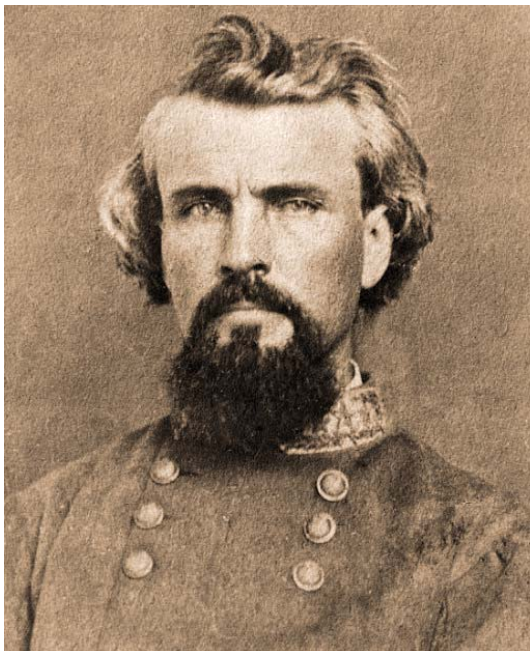
*Ian McIntyre*

### **Our Last Meeting**

Congratulations to all who were involved in our Zoom Members' Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. The session was a great success. We had two splendid presentations commencing with a brief presentation by Peter Zacharatos on 'The Battle of Brice's Crossroads – Forrest's Greatest Victory' followed by Wayne Morrison's presentation 'War Gaming Chickamauga'.

#### **Brice's Crossroads – 1864**

(With thanks to Peter - this summary is based primarily on his excellent notes of his talk)



Nathan Bedford Forrest

After his surrender at Appomattox, when asked by a Union Officer who he thought his greatest general of the war was, General Robert E. Lee replied, "Sir, a gentleman I have never had the pleasure to meet, General Nathan Bedford Forrest."

In order to delay the Union offensive in Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, Forrest, with a force of roughly 2000 cavalry set off on a raid in west Tennessee and Kentucky to attack union supply lines. Along the way he captured 612 federals, killed 79, whilst wounding another 102. On his way back through Tennessee, Forrest targeted the union garrison at Fort Pillow. Although Forrest's actions at this battle are debatable and his role in the massacre there is a matter of considerable controversy, it is undisputed that a massacre did occur and that almost 66% of the coloured troops at the garrison were killed, after allegedly surrendering. The effect of this battle was that it galvanised US coloured troops and we see this play out at Brice's Cross Roads.

As Union forces advanced towards Atlanta, their extended supply lines stretched back to Nashville, Tennessee. Forrest was determined to ride north and cut the railway lines leading into Kentucky leaving the union army without supplies. Sherman was so paranoid of this eventuality that he wrote to Secretary of War Stanton: "If we must sacrifice 10,000 lives and bankrupt the Federal Treasury, it will be worth it. There will never be peace in Tennessee till Forrest is dead."

In early June, Sherman ordered Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis with a force of 4800 infantry of which 1200 were coloured, along with 3000 cavalry, 22 cannons and 250 wagons with the task of keeping Forrest away from Tennessee. A lot of Sturgis's men were armed with the new colt repeating rifles and breach loading carbines. On 9 June, the union forces were camped 9 miles from Brice's Crossroads, a vital road section that led to Guntown Mississippi and the Mobile and Ohio railroad.

Forrest's forces were less than half this size - roughly 4000 men and 8 cannon. His command was not concentrated and was spread out. His furthest units from Brice's Crossroads were 25 miles away.

Intelligence reached Forrest late in the evening of the whereabouts of the union forces – he now knew where the enemy was whilst his own location was unknown to the enemy. Although outnumbered, Forrest felt that the terrain offered

him an advantage and he ordered forward his command.

Outnumbered 4-1, Forrest spread his forces out in the dense woods and convinced the union there were more confederates than there were. As a result, the union delayed attacking for an hour, which gave time for a further 700 confederates to reinforce Forrest. Forrest continued the bluff, which allowed 500 Alabamians to join. By 11:30, Forrest was still without his largest brigade, Bell's 2700 riders, and had no artillery. He knew he was out of time, and he could feel it. In typical Forrest language he told his staff officer *"Tell Bell to move up as fast as he can and fetch all he's got"*.

Forrest then attacked... by 12:30 pm, the Union cavalry was broken and the union infantry, as Forrest had predicted, double-quickened to the crossroads for 6 miles. The last mile they did at a run. They did this in the humidity of a Mississippi summer in cotton uniform - imagine how hot that must have been. Upon arriving, the exhausted union infantry then deployed and Forrest attacked. As the infantry was deploying, the union cavalry was withdrawing - an obvious tactical error which led to a lull in the fighting, allowing time for Bell's missing brigade to arrive; the odds had now shifted from 4-1 to 1-1.

Forrest resumed the attack at 2 pm and, plugging a gap in his line with his personal guard, turned a Union counterattack. Forrest had previously sent a regiment behind the Union lines, which blew a bugle horn in all directions, sending terror throughout the union.

By 4 pm, both sides were tired of fighting and there was another lull. Forrest then, in an almost cinematic moment, rode out in front of his men, on his horse King Phillip, exhorted *"Get up! I have ordered Bell to charge on the left. When you hear the guns and the bugle sound, every man must charge and we will give them hell!"*

Forrest then went to his left flank, and then, and... I'm not kidding... he ordered his *artillery to charge!* When his artillery commander said to Forrest *"Are you sure you want to do this? My guns will be captured"*. Forrest responded *"Guns are meant to be captured!"*

As the last attack of the day began, Forrest sent troops attacking the union flanks and his cannons started to roll forward. Double shotted with canister rolling down the road, and driven by the men firing directly at point blank range at the union, the union infantry started to collapse. The panicked union troops were forced to retreat along a narrow road.

The union coloured troops, came up to form a rear guard, wearing patches on their uniform saying 'Remember Fort Pillow'. The coloured troops fought ferociously and saved the Union army from total annihilation. However, they too were eventually broken and forced to retreat.

Forrest was able to use intelligence and visualise battles before they would occur, and Brice's Crossroads is a great example of this. His personal courage and bravery in battles cannot be understated. Upon hearing about the disaster at Brice's Crossroads an angry Sherman remarked *"that devil Forrest!"*.

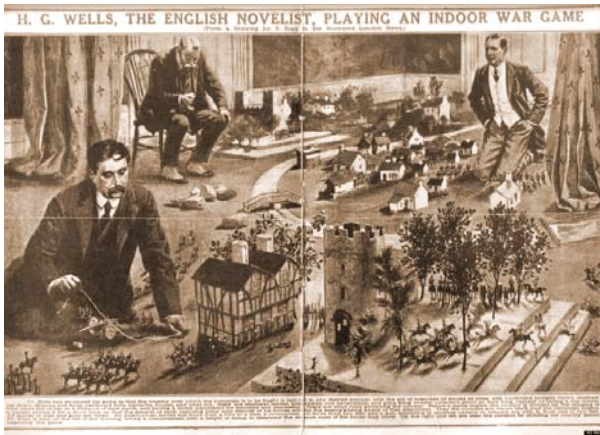
### **War Gaming Chickamauga**

Treasurer Wayne Morrison presented a wonderfully detailed account of his recent engagement (in March 2020 at Annandale) in War Gaming the first day of the Battle of Chickamauga (actually fought 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1863) - a prelude to the main battle on the following day. Wayne used this as a platform to explain to members the nature of War Gaming generally, and provided us with fascinating insights about this remarkable pastime.

War gaming can take many forms, but this version is the recreation of warfare in miniature and takes place on a table set up to resemble the terrain of the battlefield, with painted miniatures representing the troops, infantry, cavalry, artillery etc. placed in a starting position. Wayne likened the exercise to "Chess with a thousand pieces." It focuses on command and control and the role of what a commander actually does in the organization. It also highlights the interesting complexities regarding how to actually report a battle.

Wayne gave a brief history of war gaming, noting it had been used in one form or another for centuries. The first modern iteration of it was by the German/Prussian general staff in the 1870's 'Kriegspiel' movement, using wooden blocks on a table. H.G. Wells' 1901 book '*Little Wars*' first popularised war gaming as a recreational game for hobbyists by introducing a standard set of rules.

War gaming took off to a new level as a hobby in the 1950's and developed further in the 60's and 70's. It is now a commercial industry and there are now many different varieties of games and rules, with a plethora published and available on the internet, representing different historical eras and levels of complexity.



In Wayne's Chickamauga game, there were two 'gamers' on each of the opposing sides (Wayne took the game role of no less than General George Thomas, the venerable 'Rock of Chickamauga'), and the game was played according to a set of rules (there are many varieties). The rules chosen in this case being the 'Fire & Fury' Civil War Rules (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) played at the 'Brigade' Level (games can also be played at other levels such as 'Regimental' Level).



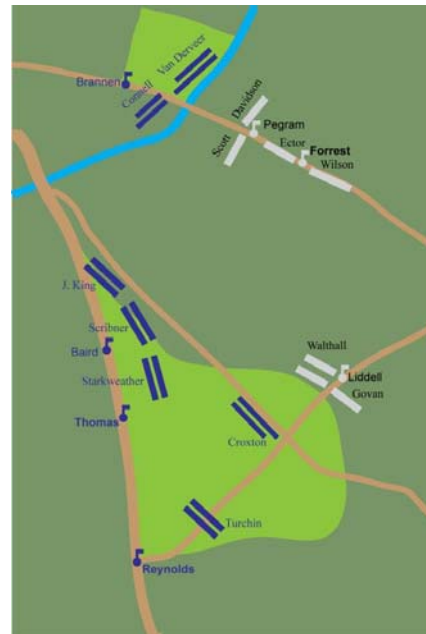
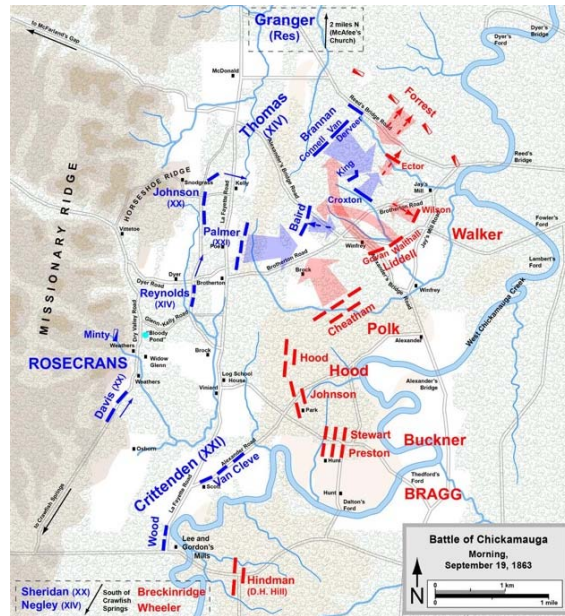
**2nd Edition  
Brigade  
Fire and Fury  
Rulebook**

Wayne explained that the rules are basically a translation from the battlefield to the table top according to scale in which 1 inch = 60 yards (many war games still use imperial measurements rather than metric) There is also a scale for the passage of time, in this case one turn = 30 minutes. The order of play is alternating turns 'I go – You go', where the sequence is as follows:

- Player A moves units after testing for their morale and whether they are in the command of a leader
- Defence 'fire' from Player B at Player A

- After results of this defensive fire are taken into account, Player A fires at Player B
- Close action combat is then resolved
- Player B then moves

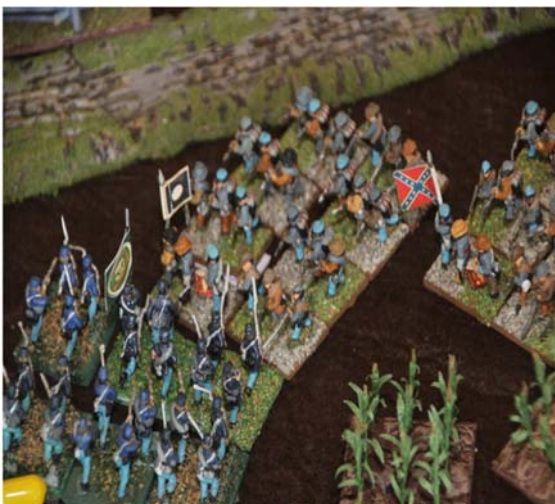
There are 'fire' and 'combat' charts in the rules for assessing the effectiveness of fire and combat, which take into account the number of troops involved, terrain advantage, range, quality of troops, morale, plus the throw of a 10-sided dice (1 – 10). In a large game, dice 'randomness' tends to even out; the key is to have the right troops in the right place regardless of the dice throw. There are markers used to indicate the morale of the units. There are also charts to determine the effectiveness of fire based on the type of weapons in use.



The actual battlefield and the game's battlefield map

In the result, the game played out pretty much as it had in the actual first day of the real battle of Chickamauga. The Southern attempt to turn the Union flank failed – reinforcing the need for an attacker to significantly outnumber a defender. Wayne felt that this particular game was not a balanced scenario and was a rather ‘slow’ game to play. Nevertheless, it was enjoyable, and it was interesting to research the battle in advance before playing the game, and to report and record on the outcome of the game (the learning process) – which is an interesting exercise in what people remember and what they ‘see’ from the helicopter view of the battlefield.

Scenes from the Gaming Table:



All in all, this was a splendid and insightful talk from Wayne, a skilled practitioner and veteran of many war games, on the intricacies of art of war gaming.

## Civil War Profile –

Alan Pinkerton 1819 - 1884



*We Never Sleep*



Alan Pinkerton was born in Glasgow, Scotland. His father was a police sergeant but died in the line of duty when Alan was only 10 years old, leaving the family in poverty. Alan left school at age 10 but was a voracious reader and became well self-educated. He found work as a cooper and in time became involved in the Chartist reform movement, advocating for universal male suffrage and political reform to benefit the working classes.

However, his chartist activities led to a warrant being issued for his arrest and he fled to the United States in 1842 with his wife Joan (whom he married that year). He settled in the township of Dundee, about 50 miles from Chicago, where he built a cabin and commenced trade as a cooper. He became an abolitionist and worked

with many leaders of the Chicago abolitionists from 1844, and his home in Dundee for a time became a stop on the underground railroad.

One day when Pinkerton was in the woods near Dundee gathering timber for barrel staves, he discovered a gang of coin counterfeiters, and spied on them over a period of time, gathering information about them. He then informed the local sheriff, who arrested the counterfeiters.

This and other amateur detective successes led eventually to Pinkerton gaining a reputation for this kind of work, and being appointed deputy county sheriff, and later deputy sheriff of Cook County in Chicago. In 1850 he struck out in partnership with a prominent Chicago lawyer named Edward Rucker to form the business that became known as the Pinkerton National Detective Agency.

The agency's early cases included chasing down the perpetrators of the new, fast-growing genre of crimes against railways and trains, and Pinkerton acquired contracts with the major railroads in the region including the Illinois Central Railroad, whose vice president and chief engineer was George B. McClellan, and whose attorney was none other than Abraham Lincoln. McClellan developed a close friendship with Pinkerton and regarded his services highly.

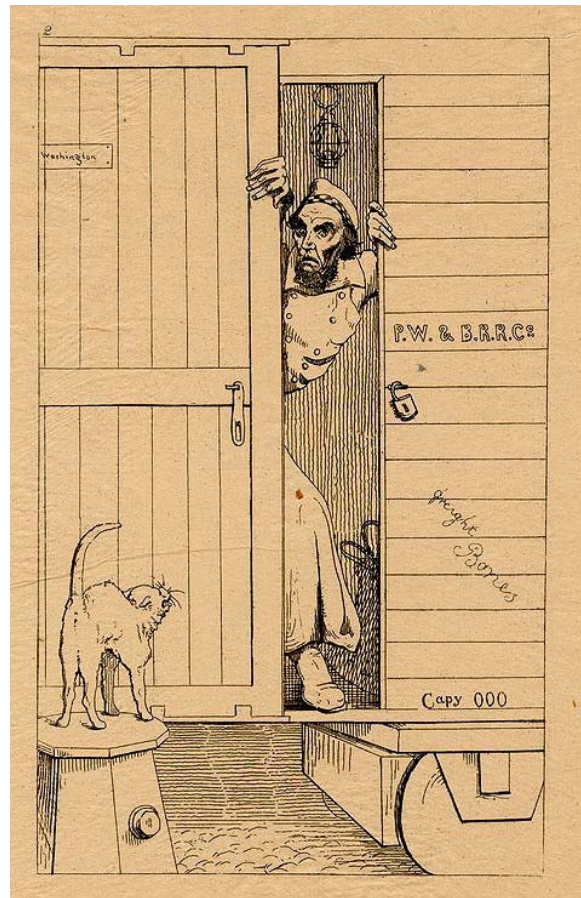
In the meantime, Pinkerton's abolitionist activities in Chicago led to meetings with John Brown and Frederick Douglass. Along with other Chicago abolitionists, he helped purchase clothes and supplies for some of Brown's activities. By one account, the suit Brown was hanged in had been amongst these provisions.

Pinkerton's growing renown and connections led to his being called upon to investigate rumours of a planned attempt to assassinate President-elect Lincoln during his rail journey from his home in Illinois to Washington on the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad. Pinkerton considered the greatest risk was in Baltimore, Maryland, a slave state where there were many secessionists, and he commenced his investigations there with a number of his agents, gathering information over a period of time.

The day before Lincoln was due to commence his journey, Pinkerton received a letter indicating that the son of a prominent Maryland citizen had taken an oath with several others to assassinate Lincoln. Two of Pinkerton's men, and a female agent he employed by the name of Kate Warne, meanwhile had been able to penetrate the group of conspirators and ascertain the details of their plan, which was to create a disturbance while Lincoln was travelling between train depots in

Baltimore that would draw away his police protection and create the opportunity for an assassin to attack him and then melt into the crowd. Accordingly, Pinkerton devised a secret re-scheduling of Lincoln's itinerary from Philadelphia. Lincoln would board a different special train disguised as the invalid brother of Kate Warne, and, arriving in Baltimore on the train in the dead of night at 3.00, would be transferred to the depot for Washington-bound trains.

Pinkerton met with Lincoln, who reluctantly agreed with the advice. All went according to plan and Lincoln arrived safely in Washington, although not without some fun and ridicule being poked at him for arriving in the capital in disguise as the cartoon (below) shown suggests.



Contemporary cartoon of Lincoln disguised on a night train on his way to Washington

Nine days after the firing on Fort Sumter, Pinkerton wrote to Lincoln offering his services, but before he received any reply, he was approached by General George B McClellan to establish a military intelligence operation under his command, to gather information through agents infiltrating the South. Pinkerton himself travelled South disguised as a confederate soldier 'Major E.J. Allen'. He obtained some useful information from slaves building fortifications around Memphis, and he had drinks

at one point with General Gideon Pillow who provided him with valuable information.

In the nick of time, Pinkerton received information from a black hotel porter that he had been recognised by one of General Pillow's spies and that he should immediately flee, which he did. He went on to Jackson Mississippi, scouting roads and fortifications. He was recognised there by a barber when he went to have a shave but managed to bluff and convince the man he was wrong. He decided it was time to go back North.

Pinkerton continued to work for McClellan after he took command of the Army of the Potomac. He was instrumental in exposing the Confederate spy Rose Greenhow. He also worked on supplying estimates of Confederate strength based on information passed back from his spies behind the lines. Unfortunately, the estimates he provided McClellan vastly overestimated the number of Confederate troops in front of McClellan at the beginning of the Peninsula Campaign, asserting that the Confederates had nearly double McClellan's 70,000 men, whereas they only had about 17,000 on the Peninsula at the time.

Pinkerton made similar errors at Antietam, so that McClellan did not fully appreciate the extent of his numerical advantage against Lee, which contributed to his decision not to commit his reserves and not to pursue the retreating Confederates. McClellan probably reposed undue confidence in an agency that was, essentially, a civil detective agency with wide experience in railroad security and crime, but virtually no expertise in military affairs and assessing troop strengths and movements. Nevertheless, Pinkerton's advice probably contributed to McClellan's legendary slowness to take offensive action.

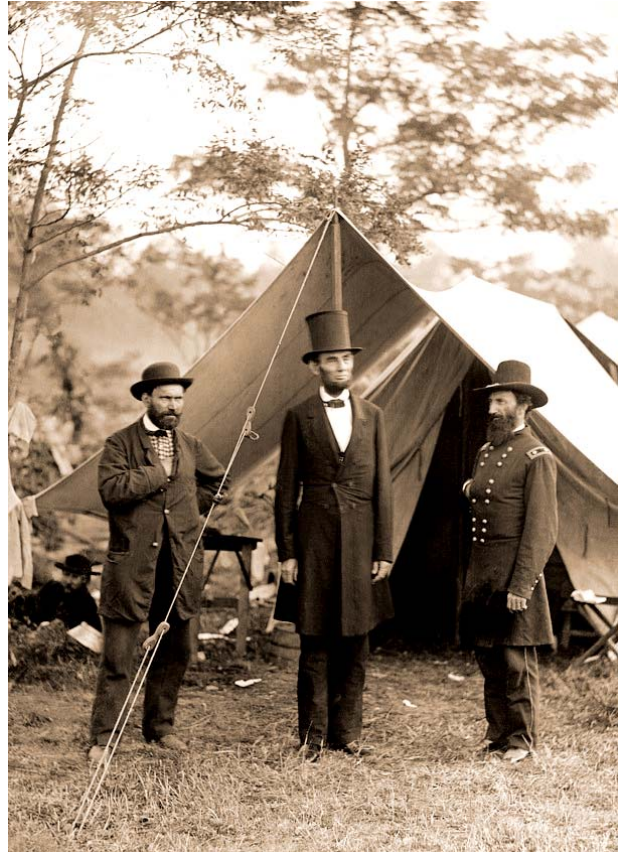
Pinkerton resigned his position shortly after Lincoln dismissed McClellan from command of the Army of the Potomac but continued providing service to the government for the rest of the war, mostly uncovering vast numbers of property fraud and fraudulent claims against the government for property loss during the war.

After the war, Pinkerton and his agency were kept very busy, and with varying degrees of success, chasing outlaws, bank robbers and railroad robbers, such as the Reno Gang (success) and Frank and Jesse James (no success), and also infiltrated the notorious coal miner's alleged terrorist group the 'Molly Maguires' (events which inspired Conan Doyle's famous Sherlock Holmes story '*The Valley of Fear*'); his agents were extensively involved in strike-breaking on behalf of business owners.

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency hired women and minorities from its founding, a practice uncommon at the time, and at its height was the largest private investigation company in the world. Pinkerton's agency continues to this day, as a division of a Swedish security company Securitas AB.

An interesting life indeed!

For further reading see '*The Pinkerton Agency*' (Charles River Editions) available on Amazon Kindle. Pinkerton himself also wrote many books including *Thirty Years a Detective*, *The Molly Maguires*, and numerous popular detective stories allegedly based on his experiences.



Pinkerton at Antietam with Lincoln and General McClellan, after the battle

### 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



**Dear Honest Abe,**

***Did you ever personally come under fire during the Civil War?***

**Charlton H.**

Well, thanks for your question Charlton – you always were obsessed with guns!

Not including the shot from that traitor John Wilkes Booth that ultimately killed me, truth is YES, I did come under fire a few times at least, more fool me! I'll tell you about a couple occasions on two consecutive days when I had some serious good luck.

On 11 July, 1864, Lee's bad old man Jubal Early, on General Lee's orders, had brought 15,000 rebel soldiers up the Shenandoah Valley through Maryland to the outskirts of the District of Columbia – you could see their dust from the unfinished Capitol dome!

Well I went up to Fort Stevens with our available troops (not many at that point!) as Early was planning to launch his attack against the fort. I wanted to survey things so I looked over the earthen parapet. Well gracious me if a shot from a rebel sniper didn't ring out and a ball crash just by me...a soldier roughly ordered me to get down or I "would have my head knocked off" - it was a close call!

Well, General Early seemed to be hesitating about launching a full attack on our fortifications, and I knew General Grant was rushing thousands of reinforcements to strengthen Washington's defences, so I went back to the White House feeling reassured about how things were progressing. That night, through a pair of binoculars from a White House window, I watched our reinforcements arriving.

Next day I rode in a carriage out to the fort again accompanied by my wife Mary and our boy Todd, and we spoke with some of our wounded and encouraged our surgeons as best we could. I left Mary for a moment to again mount the fort's parapet when suddenly a shot rang out... then, three feet away from me, a Union officer, a

surgeon, fell to the ground with a terrible wound to his leg. I immediately received repeated entreaties and threats from those nearby that I would be forcibly removed if I didn't take cover, and after a time I reluctantly agreed. One of our officers had the effrontery to yell "Get down, you fool!" I later learned this was a courageous young officer named Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Well I was pretty cantankerous at the rebels shooting at me, so I ordered our artillery officers to shell some of the houses that the rebel snipers were shooting from. That made me feel a lot better!

Well General Early never launched a full attack and he withdrew later that night – no doubt he was persuaded to do so by the arrival of Grant's considerable forces. In the meantime, Mary, Todd and I rode back to the White House and slept like babies knowing that the situation was in hand. The rebels never did attack Washington again!

So there you have it Charlton – as you know, guns are dangerous things in the hands of the wrong sorts of people. Here's a picture of the kind of rebel sharpshooter's gun that nearly brought me to grief before my time – a British long barrelled, muzzle loading .457 single-shot rifle with a hexagonally-rifled barrel designed by Sir Joseph Whitworth. It was the same type of gun that killed General Sedgwick immediately after he had yelled out that the rebel snipers "couldn't hit an elephant" from where they were! It could range up to 2,000 yards and it seems I was only 800 yards away from Early's boys when the shots that nearly hit me were fired.

Best wishes, Abe



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 e-mail to: [secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au](mailto:secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au)