

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 full-day Conference that we held in the week before Easter, this year, continued the trend of our previous conferences in being an outstanding success. In my view, these conferences enhance our Chapter's reputation for being able to provide something very special for people with an interest in America's Civil War.

This year, the success of our conference was due to the fine selection of visiting speakers that were assembled to give the various presentations and to them we are most grateful for making the day the success that it was. I must admit that I felt more than a little intimidated in having to follow this esteemed group of historians and try to the finish the conference on a "high note" with the final presentation of the day!

I was particularly appreciative of the United States Consul General, Stephen T Smith, taking the time to open the Conference, then stay for good part of the morning's activities and speak with participants over morning tea. My only regret is that he and his AFP "minders" missed Angus Curry's presentation on the Lincoln Assassination. I would have loved to see the look on the minders' faces when Angus recounted how Lincoln's bodyguard became bored with his task and went out for a drink allowing John Wilkes Booth ready access to the President's box!

I was thrilled to observe that Adrian Chapman-Davies, the Year 11 student from Sydney Grammar School won the major prize in our conference raffle – Shelby Foote's Civil War trilogy, kindly donated by Dr Mark Killingback, I could not think of a better person to have won this prize. The winner of the "lucky door prize" was the Consul General who kindly donated the prize back for one of our raffles at a forthcoming meeting.

Whilst on the subject of prizes, I would want to thank, also, the Kirkby family for again coming to our aid with the donation of a \$50 book voucher for the raffle and to John King from Queensland for his donation of the 1000 piece jigsaw puzzles with the Civil War battle theme. We still have one of Kingey's puzzles left, which we will be raffling later in the year. These most generous donations really help us in meeting the costs associated with the Chapter's activities. Thanks!

John Cook has assembled the papers from the Conference into a bound publication, which will be available to all Conference participants in the coming weeks. If you missed the Conference, but would still like a copy of this publication, they are available at a very reasonable price of \$25 per copy. We have only printed enough for those attending the conference, but contact John and he will arrange a special printing of any additional copies required.

In early June, Roger and Elaine Dixon arrive back in Australia after their two-year stint in the vineyards of New Jersey. We are looking forward to catching up again with both of them now at our regular meetings and hearing more of their adventures through the Civil War battlefields. Welcome back Elaine and Roger!

At the risk of ending my message to members on a sour note, I would want to express my disappointment at the cancellation of the Annual Memorial Day Ceremony that has been held for many years at Waverley Cemetery. This simple service and the hospitality extended afterwards at the local RSL Club was something that a number of our members had participated in over the past few years and we were saddened by its being abandoned this year. Perhaps this is something that our Chapter members might wish to arrange for future years, possibly in collaboration with our two Honorary Members and officers of the US Consulate in Sydney? I would appreciate your thoughts on this matter.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting at the end of June.

Paul Kensey

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

It Happened in May

Hatches and Dispatches

May 10, 1863 – Thomas J (Stonewall) Jackson dies at Guinea Station, Virginia, aged 39 years;

May 11, 1864 – JEB Stuart is mortally wounded at the Battle of Yellow Tavern, Virginia;

May 23, 1824 – Ambrose Burnside (USA) is born in Liberty, Indiana;

May 28, 1818 – Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard (CSA) is born in St Bernard, Louisiana;

Command Changes

May 2, 1863 – JEB Stuart assumes command of the Confederate cavalry after “Stonewall” Jackson is mortally wounded in the Battle of Chancellorsville;

Battles

May 1, 1863 – Battle of Port Gibson, MS, which begins Grant’s Vicksburg Campaign;

May 1 - 4, 1863 – Battle of Chancellorsville, that results in stunning Confederate victory for Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia;

May 5, 1864 – Battle of the Wilderness begins;

May 8, 1864 – Fighting begins at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia;

May 12, 1864 – Battle of Bloody Angle, Spotsylvania;

May 12, 1865 – The last land battle between large forces resulting in a Confederate victory takes place at Palmito Ranch, Texas;

May 16, 1863 – Battle of Champion Hill, Mississippi;

May 17, 1863 – Battle of Big Black River Bridge, MS;

May 18, 1863 – Siege of Vicksburg, MS, begins;

May 19, 1863 – Grant launches his first unsuccessful attack against the besieged Vicksburg;

May 23 – 26, 1864 – Battle of North Anna, Virginia;

May 25, 1862 – Jackson attacks the Federals in the First Battle of Winchester, VA and captures the town two days later;

May 27, 1862 – Battle of Slash Church (Hanover Court House);

May 31, 1862 – Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) where General Joseph Johnston (CSA) is severely wounded.

Other Significant Events

May 4, 1865 – Lincoln is buried in Springfield, Illinois;

May 9, 1865 – The trial of the 8 accused Lincoln assassination conspirators begins;

March 4, 1865 – Lincoln is inaugurated for a second term as President;

May 10, 1865 – Jefferson Davis is captured near Irwinville, Georgia;

May 16, 1861 – Tennessee is officially admitted to the Confederacy

May 20, 1861 – North Carolina becomes the 11th state to join the Confederacy whilst Kentucky issues a proclamation of neutrality;

May 29, 1865 – President Johnson grants amnesty and pardon to all who participated in “the existing rebellion”, with a few exceptions.

The Private Soldiers’ War

“Where men fell and left a vacant place other men stepped into their places and although death stared them in the face there was not a man who faltered”

- Josiah F Murphy, Private,
20th Mass Infantry

“As I witnessed one line swept away by one fearful blast from Kershaw’s men behind the stone wall, I forgot they were enemies and only remembered that they were men, and it is hard to see in cold blood brave men die.”

- Alexander Hunter, Private,
17th Virginia Infantry

“I looked around and I was all alone”

- George S Barnsley, Private
8th Georgia Infantry

“I marvelled as I heard the unremitting, patter, snip, thud and hum of the bullets, how anyone could live under this raining death”

- Henry M Stanley, Private,
6th Arkansas Infantry

It Happened in June

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

June 1, 1831 – John Bell Hood (CSA) is born in Owingsville, Bath County, Kentucky;

June 3, 1808 – Confederate President Jefferson Davis is born in Christian County, Kentucky;

June 5, 1864 – On Matagorda Island, Texas, 13 black members of the Union's Corps de Afrique are hanged by Federal military authorities after convictions for mutiny;

June 5, 1864 – Brigadier General William E (Grumble) Jones (CSA) is killed in action in the Shenandoah Valley;

June 14, 1811 – Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is born
Litchfield, Conn;

June 14, 1864 – General Leonidas Polk, (CSA) is killed at Pine Mountain, Georgia during the Atlanta Campaign.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

June 17, 1862 – Braxton Bragg succeeds General Beauregard as Commander of the Western Department of the Confederate Army

April 22, 1861 – Robert E Lee is named commander of the forces of Virginia;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

June 1 – 3, 1864 – Battle of Cold Harbor, Virginia;

June 1, 1862 – Second day of fighting in the Battle of Seven Forks;

June 6, 1862 – The Battle of Memphis, Tennessee;

June 8, 1862 - Confederate forces under "Stonewall Jackson, successfully fight off Federal attacks and achieve victory at the Battle of Cross Keys, Virginia;

June 9, 1863 – Battle of Brandy Station, Virginia, which is the largest cavalry battle ever fought on American soil. In this battle JEB Stuart was surprised by the Union forces commanded by Alfred Pleasanton and narrowly escapes defeat;

June 10, 1861 – Battle of Big Bethel, Virginia, is the first major battle of the Civil War. Although outnumbering the Confederates by more than four to one, the Union attack failed disastrously;

June 12 – 15, 1862 – JEB Stuart's spectacular four-day reconnaissance that develops into a ride around McClellan's army on the Virginia Peninsula;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

June 21, 1863 – Heavy skirmishing marks Lee's advance north with engagements at several places in Virginia and in Frederick, Maryland;

June 27, 1864 – Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Ga, results in a Confederate victory thus temporarily checking Sherman's march on Atlanta.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

June 4, 1862 – Southern planters burn huge stocks of cotton on the Yazoo and the Mississippi to prevent their capture;

June 19, 1862 – President Lincoln signs into law a measure prohibiting slavery in the territories of the United States;

June 20, 1863 – By presidential proclamation West Virginia is admitted to the Union as the 35th State;

June 23, 1861 – Federal balloonist Thaddeus Lowe observes and maps the Confederate lines over northern Virginia;

June 25, 1864 – At Petersburg, Federal engineers begin digging a tunnel towards Confederate lines which they hope will enable them to blow apart the Southern earthworks;

June 28, 1863 – Lee diverts Confederate forces from an intended drive to Harrisburg to march them towards Gettysburg;

June 30, 1865 – All eight alleged conspirators in the Lincoln assassination are found guilty.

Differing Religious Views of Battle?

"Never in any battle I had witnessed was there such a discharge of cannon and musketry... The first thing I saw was General Rosecrans crossing himself – he was a very devout Catholic. "Hello!" I said to myself, "If the general is crossing himself, we are in a desperate situation"

- Charles H Dana, Assistant U.S. Secretary of War, at Chickamauga

"The taking of Missionary Ridge, therefore, was inaugurated not so much by the genius of commanders or the bravery of soldiers, as by mistake"

- Union Chaplain John J Hight, Missionary Ridge

Our Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held at our normal venue, the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Wednesday, June 28, 2006**, with members, as usual, being able to meet at the Club **from 6pm for a bistro style meal**.

This meeting is going to be quite different from our usual evening meetings in that we are having the eminent Civil War scholar and author Dr Gary Gallagher from the University of Virginia present two short lectures on Confederate commanders. These two presentations are:

- **One Promotion Too Many – A P Hill**
- **One of the Best Younger Officers – Edward Porter Alexander**

Before you jump to the conclusion that our Committee has blown all our Chapter's funds by flying Dr Gallagher from the US to Australia for these presentations ... Dr Gallagher is coming to us through the marvels of modern electronics via a series of his lectures on *Robert E Lee and His High Command* now available on DVD!

At the conclusion of these presentations there will be the opportunity for some discussion amongst those present and any member wishing to view other lectures in Dr Gallagher's series will be able to obtain the DVD set on short-term loan from John Cook.

Your Committee will be particularly interested in any feedback you might have on this change to our normal meeting format and whether other variations in format should be considered for the future.

Conference Papers Available

As noted by our Chairman in his message to members in this Newsletter, the bound sets of Conference Papers are now available to participants. This publication has been prepared through the efforts of a number of our members and hopefully will provide a permanent record of what has been our best Conference ever (at least until the next one in 2008).

John Cook is arranging the delivery of the papers to all Conference participants with a view to having their delivery finalised by the time of our next meeting.

If you were not able to be at the Conference but would still like to obtain a copy of the papers, they are available at a cost of \$25 per copy. To obtain a copy of the papers please contact John on telephone 9412 3214 and he will arrange a special printing of papers for you.

For those who wish to check out what they will be getting before purchase, an inspection copy of the publication will be available at our June meeting. You will be assured that this is a value-for-money purchase!

A Just and Lasting Peace

1862 was the second summer of a war that most thought would last just a few months. As the casualties mounted from the battles at Wilson's Creek, Bull Run, Shiloh, and Fort Donelson, it was clear this war would be long. A plan was needed to ensure that the Americans killed in it would be honoured with the dignified burials they deserved.

That July, Congress enacted legislation authorising the procurement of grounds for use as national cemeteries. Fourteen cemeteries were established the first year, including one in the Maryland town of Sharpsburg where 4,476 Union soldiers were laid to rest after the terrible first day of the Battle of Antietam. This battle still is the bloodiest one-day battle in American history, where Union and Confederate casualties, both killed and wounded, totalled 17,300.

After the Civil War, Army crews scoured the countryside to locate the remains of hastily, and sometimes un-buried, soldiers. By 1870, nearly 300,000 Civil War dead had been buried in the 73 national cemeteries thus far established. Sadly, due to time and the chaotic heat of battle, the identities of nearly half of those re-buried remain unknown.

Today there are 139 national cemeteries holding the remains of those who fought in all of America's wars. The Veterans Administration, through its National Cemetery Administration (NCA), oversees 123 of these cemeteries. Recently, the NCA Memorials Inventory Project documented over 1000 memorial objects in these cemeteries. Memorial objects include carillons, gun monuments, plaques, and stones. The vast majority of these are related to the Civil War, including the latest, a statue dedicated to the United States Colored (*sic*) Troops at Nashville National Cemetery in Tennessee.

Almost all the funds to pay for this statue came from private donations, including contributions from the Sons of the Confederacy. Unveiled in February 2006, it is the only freestanding monument in a national cemetery dedicated to African American soldiers. Its location in Tennessee is fitting as well. Of the almost 200,000 African American soldiers who fought in the Civil War, the "Volunteer State" furnished over 20,000. This was in sharp response to the sceptics who shrilly questioned, "Will the Negro fight?"

This monument to African American soldiers embodies President Lincoln's belief that the Civil War was the nation's punishment for the offence of slavery. At the same time, Lincoln's provision for a national cemetery system ensured that all those, both black and white, "who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan "... would be recognized for their supreme sacrifice."

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