

Sumter to Appomattox

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

No. 62, November – December 2012
Special Christmas / End-of-Year Edition

Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

As we come to the end of 2012, I believe we can look back on the year as one where we have “turned the corner” as far as membership numbers and numbers attending our regular meetings. We have seen a significant number of new members accompanied by their spouses/partners coming to our meetings. The challenge now for your new executive and committee is to maintain the impetus that was achieved over this year.

While speaking of the new Committee for 2013, we will be having a short (very short) Annual General Meeting prior to the festivities at our next meeting on November 30 (see details of this in the adjoining column and in the enclosures with this Newsletter). I ask that all members, new and old, give consideration to serving on our Committee. I can give an absolute guarantee that none of our existing Executive or Committee members have an emotional attachment to their positions and we are actively seeking new blood for both the Executive and the Committee. Please consider.

Next year looks like being a special one with preliminary planning for the visit to Australia of Ed Bears, one of the key commentators in the Ken Burns’ *The Civil War* series on TV. At present we are planning for him to speak to us in mid-March following a social event (barbeque) the previous evening. This will be a great opportunity to hear one of the doyens of the American Civil War historical community and should not be missed.

I would wish to thank the Executive, Brendan O’Connell, our Secretary/Treasurer, and Bruce McLennan, our Program Director, for their initiative and tireless work over the whole year in making our year’s program the success it has been. Our Committee members, also, have been a great support to the 2012 program. Thank you so much.

Lastly, I want to wish all members of the Chapter the compliments of the Season and a Happy and Prosperous 2013.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

As foreshadowed in the Message to Members in the adjoining column of this Newsletter, our next meeting will be our **End-of-Year/Christmas Function**. The function is to be held on **Friday, November 30, commencing from 7pm**.

As is our custom, this function is one for the wives, husbands and partners as well as members of the Chapter, so please bring along your “better half”, if only to see there are others who do not share with us a passion for matters Civil War. This Christmas Function will take the form of a very short Annual General Meeting to elect the Executive and Committee for 2013 followed by a two-course sit-down meal. The venue for this function is **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**

The cost for the evening is **\$45:00 per person** for the two courses and table wines/soft drinks during Dinner. Additional drinks prior to the Dinner may be purchased at the bar. The cost of the evening with the evening is to be subsidised to a significant extent by our raffle and from Chapter funds.

Please let Brendan O’Connell know if you are coming as soon as possible but no later than Wednesday, November 28. Brendan can be contacted either by ‘phone on (02) 9449 3720 or by e-mail at secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au. This function will be a great way to end our year’s activities and it is hoped that there will be a large turnout of members to celebrate together.

Towards the end of the meal, we will be holding a “non-threatening” Civil War Quiz with some interesting prizes. This quiz is to be similar to the very popular quiz held at our Christmas function in 2011 and is being repeated following a number of requests from members. The ‘non-threatening’ nature of the quiz is based on the intention that the questions will be in the “multiple-choice” format, requiring you to answer “A”, “B”, “C”, or “D” rather than come up with a substantive answer. Everybody knows that these types of questions are easy!

It Happened in November

HATCHES AND DISPATCHES

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 CHANGES

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, Ga., destroy bridges, foundries and 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 – The Federal army under command of John Schofield withdraws under Hood's nose without suffering attack in the "Spring Hill Affair" (in Tennessee).

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

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

November 8, 1864 – Lincoln is re-elected as United States 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 – 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.

Inescapable Logic...

"I have just heard that one of my brothers was killed in the war. Since he chose to be our deadly enemy, I see no reason why I should bitterly mourn his death. Why should I sympathise with the Rebels? They would hang my husband tomorrow if it was (sic) in their power!"

- Mary Todd Lincoln, 1862.

"A battery of field artillery is worth a thousand muskets"

- William Tecumseh Sherman

"The shot that struck me down is the very best that has been fired for the Southern cause. While (I do not have) the confidence of the government, now they have in my place one who does possess it"

- Joseph E Johnston commenting on Lee's promotion to command the Confederate Army, June 1862

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, 2075 or by e-mail secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

It Happened in December

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

December 3, 1826 – George Brinton McClellan is born in Philadelphia;

December 5, 1839 – George Armstrong Custer is born in New Rumley, Ohio;

December 6, 1833 – John Singleton Mosby, (CSA), is born in Edgemont, Virginia;

December 13, 1818 – Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln, is born in Lexington, Kentucky;

December 19, 1814 – Edwin Stanton, US Secretary of War 1862 - 1868 is born Steubenville, Ohio;

December 29, 1808 – Andrew Johnson, 17th US President, 1865 – 1868, who succeeded Lincoln, is born in Raleigh, S.C.;

December 31, 1815 – George Gordon Meade is born in Cadiz, Spain.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

December 2, 1863 – General Braxton Bragg turns over command of the Army of Tennessee to Lieutenant General William Hardee at Dalton, Georgia;

December 4, 1862 – Confederate General Joseph E Johnston assumes command in the West;

December 14, 1861 – Brigadier General H H Sibley is assigned command of all Confederate forces on the upper Rio Grande and in the New Mexico and Arizona Territories;

December 15, 1863 – Major General Jubal Early, CSA is assigned to the Shenandoah District.

NAVAL ACTIONS

December 1, 1861 – US gunboat Penguin captures the Blockade Runner *Albion* off Nassau and confiscates its cargo;

December 12, 1862 – On the Yazoo River, Miss., the Federal ironclad Cairo strikes a mine and sinks;

December 17, 1861 – Federals sink a number of hulks loaded with stones in Savannah Harbour in an effort to halt shipping;

December 24, 1864 – Federal fleet bombards Fort Fisher, guarding Wilmington, NC, the last Confederate open port;

December 30, 1862 – The USS Monitor, hero of the battle with the Merrimack, flounders off Cape Hatteras in heavy seas, 16 officers and men are lost.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

December 7, 1862 – Confederate raider, John Hunt Morgan, with 1,400 men surprises a Federal garrison at Hartsville, Tenn., taking 1,800 prisoners;

December 16, 1864 – Battle of Nashville ends as Confederate army commanded by General John B Hood, is almost destroyed by Union troops under General George Thomas;

December 25, 1864 – Federals land troops to take Fort Fisher, N.C., but the assault fails and they are withdrawn;

December 26, 1862 – Federals attack a guerrilla camp in Powell County, Kentucky;

December 28, 1862 – Federal Army of the Frontier pushes back Confederates at Dripping Springs, Arkansas, capturing Van Buren.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

December 8, 1862 – Lincoln issues Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, pardoning participants in “the existing rebellion” if they take the oath to the Union;

December 9, 1863 – Black Federal troops at Fort Jackson, La., mutiny over alleged mistreatment of one white officer of his troops;

December 10, 1861 – An Act of the Confederate Congress in Richmond admits Kentucky to the Confederacy, thus completing the 13 states;

December 11, 1861 – Already suffering under the Federal blockade, Charleston, S.C., is struck by a disastrous fire sweeping through its business district;

December 18, 1865 – The 13th Amendment to the US Constitution abolishing slavery is declared in effect by Secretary of State Seward after approval by 27 states;

December 20, 1860 – The South Carolina Convention in Charleston passes a formal declaration of secession. The first state to secede;

December 22, 1864 – General Sherman sends President Lincoln: “I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah;

December 27, 1860 – The US flag is raised over Fort Sumter as South Carolina troops occupy Charleston forts.

Words of Wisdom...

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

- Abraham Lincoln

Notice of Annual General Meeting

In accordance with the relevant legislation, notice is hereby given that the annual general meeting of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia, NSW Chapter Incorporated will be held at 7pm on Friday, November 30, 2012, at the Roseville RSL Memorial Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville.

Business:

- To receive the report from the Secretary of activities throughout 2012 and proposed program for 2013;
- To receive and if thought fit adopt the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2012;
- To elect office-bearers of the Association and ordinary members of the committee;
- To transact any other business in accordance with the rules of the Round Table.

Brendan O'Connell
Secretary/Treasurer

Please Note:

1. The financial statements for this Annual General Meeting are enclosed as an attachment to this Newsletter.
2. Included as an attachment to this Newsletter, also, is a nomination form for the 2013 Executive and/or Committee, which should be returned to the Secretary/Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell prior to the AGM.
3. The length of the meeting is to be very short and will not interfere with the festivities of the evening. Guaranteed!!

“Little Phil’s” Dark Side

Unquestionably, one of key figures in the ultimate Union victory in the Civil War was General Philip H Sheridan. Yet Sheridan had a disagreeable side in his dealings with subordinate officers and a penchant for ruining the careers of officers to whom he took a disliking. Presented here is one of the most famous of Sheridan's “sackings”.

At the beginning of April 1865, in the final days of the Confederacy, Union troops under command of General Sheridan had an important victory at the Battle of Five Forks. Sheridan should have been happy with the actions of his troops in taking the enemy's defensive positions so decisively. Rather than celebrate this victory, however, Sheridan relieved, without justification, Major General Gouverneur K Warren of command of the Union V Corps.

“Little Phil’s” Dark Side (cont'd)

This action was to ruin Warren's distinguished service career and was in spite of Warren's troops having played a key role in winning the battle.

Years later, but after Warren's death, a court of inquiry exonerated Warren for his conduct during the battle. Warren went to his grave protesting that his actions during the Five Forks battle were proper and was never to know of this vindication by the court of inquiry.

An Update on the Visit by Ed Bears in 2013...

As advised in our last Newsletter, our Melbourne cousins are proposing to bring to Australia the very well-known Civil War historian and guide, Ed Bears, in late March 2013. Members would have seen Bears as a key commentator with a somewhat distinctive voice in the Ken Burns' *The Civil War* series, first shown on TV in the 1990s and now available on DVD at a very reasonable price.

The advice we have so far on this proposed visit is that Ed Bears will be the keynote speaker at the Melbourne conference/symposium on March 23 and at their regular meeting the following week. The Queensland group have asked for him to speak to them on Saturday, March 16. Your Executive is planning to have Bears speak to us at a regular meeting on the following Monday evening, (March 18) and have him as a guest at an informal social function the previous day.

Having access to Ed Bears for our meeting is not without cost and we have been asked to contribute 25% towards his airfare and pay his accommodation costs whilst in Sydney. Whilst the total cost of this visit is still being negotiated, we have been assured that our contribution to the costs will be less than \$1,000. To ensure that we are able to meet this commitment, your Committee is planning a small number of “painless” initiatives to ensure our finances continue to remain healthy.

In the meantime, keep both Sunday March 17 and Monday evening March 18, 2013 clear for what will be a pleasant social function and an exceptional evening meeting.

Famous Last Words...

“I'll never write my memoirs, I would be trading on the blood of my men”

- General Robert E Lee