

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 –

Our first meeting for the year is to be held on Monday, March 10, and it is hoped that we will be able to maintain the quality of presentations that characterised our 2013 program. Your Committee has met to plan the program for this year and has considered a number of alternatives to our meeting format, which I hope we might discuss at our next meeting. In this regard, I draw your attention to the item 'We're Looking For Speakers' on the third page of this Newsletter and ask that you give some thought to these proposals.

Our Joint Program Directors for 2014, Bruce McLennan and Philip Shanahan, are looking to a program in 2014 that provides more opportunities for active involvement of all members. In addition, our Chapter has taken a new thrust by creating a Facebook that will be managed by Peter Zacharatos. Thank you Peter!

One of less successful initiatives in 2013 was the sale of Civil War books donated by three of our members. The range of books available in this collection contains many of the Civil War history classics and is still available for purchase at rock bottom prices. Indeed, I can assure you that you will not find a better selection in any bookshop and certainly individual books will not be sold at a lower price. If you are interested, please contact Brendan O'Connell as soon as possible to see what is still available and he will work out a great deal for you.

Whilst on the subject of books, we have been offered a full set of the Time-Life Civil War series of books, 25 volumes in total. Your Committee has considered what we might do with this donation and has taken the decision that the set be a raffle prize at one of our regular meetings. It is hoped that they will be available for inspection at our next meeting on March 10.

Finally, I would ask you to make a special effort to be at our first meeting on March 10, to set the scene for a great 2014 program of meetings.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on **Monday, March 10**, at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club**, Pacific Highway, Roseville. As is our custom, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal at **6:00pm** with the meeting proper to start somewhere around **7:15 – 7:30pm**. The presentation at the meeting will involve a DVD viewing of one of the eminent Civil War historian, Dr Gary Gallagher's, lectures from his Civil War series, the title of which is:

Sinews of War – Finance and Supply

This lecture will look at how both the Union and the Confederacy raised the money necessary to maintain their armies in the field throughout the long and gruelling four years of the War. Dr Gallagher will assess, also, the relative abundance and quality of the weapons, clothing and food supplied to soldiers in the opposing armies.

For those members who have not seen Dr Gallagher's lectures previously, you may be assured that you are in for a special treat! For those members who have heard him before, this lecture is up there with the best of his presentations.

In addition to the Gallagher presentation, we will be conducting our regular and popular "show and tell" segment in which individual members are able to share with members interesting "snippets" relating to the period they have come across in recent times. If you have something to share, please be prepared to give a short (3 – 4 minutes) presentation.

Finally, Philip Shanahan, a new member of our Committee will present two items, one a "show-and-tell" and the other a book review. These items are:

★ George Meade – the Geoffrey Boycott of the Union;

★ Book review of "*Little Phil – A Reassessment of the Civil War Leadership of General Philip H Sheridan*"

It is hoped that these short contributions to the meeting will serve to raise interest in other members to make similar contributions in subsequent meetings

It Happened in March

HATCHES AND DISPATCHES

March 6, 1831 - Philip H Sheridan is born in Albany, New York;

March 22, 1817 - Braxton Bragg (CSA) is born in Warrenton, North Carolina;

March 28, 1818 - Wade Hampton (CSA) is born in Charleston, South Carolina.

COMMAND CHANGES

March 5, 1862 - Pierre G T Beauregard assumes command of the Confederate Army of Mississippi;

March 9, 1864 - Ulysses S Grant is named General-in-Chief of the Army of the United States;

March 11, 1862, - Lincoln removes McClellan from his command as General-in-Chief of the Union armies;

March 17, 1864 - Lieutenant General U S Grant formally assumes command of the armies of the United States.

BATTLES/MILITARY ACTIONS

March 2, 1865 - Battle of Waynesborough - the last campaign in the Shenandoah Valley;

March 7, 1862 - Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), the biggest battle west of the Mississippi;

March 9, 1862 - Ironclads CSS *Virginia* and USS *Monitor* engage at Hampton Roads, Virginia;

March 12, 1864 - Red River campaign begins under command of Nathaniel Banks (USA);

March 16, 1865 - Battle of Averasborough, N.C.
March 19, 1865 - Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina;

March 21, 1865 - Last major effort by the Confederates to Stop Sherman 's march south of Bentonville, N.C.

March 23, 1862 - Jackson and Shields Clash at the Battle of Kernstown, VA;

March 25, 1865 - Grant defeats Lee at Fort Stedman, Virginia.

March 25, 1865 - Union troops begin the siege of Mobile, Alabama;

March 29, 1865 - The beginning of the final Appomattox campaign;

March 30, 1864 - Confederates attack Snyder's Bluff, Mississippi.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

March 4, 1861 - Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th President of the United States;

March 4, 1861 - The "Stars and Bars" is designated as the official Confederate flag;

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

March 13, 1863 - Explosion at the Confederate Ordnance Laboratory in Richmond kills or injures 69 people;

March 14, 1863 - Farragut leads his Union flotilla up the Mississippi past Port Hudson, La;

March 21, 1861 - Louisiana ratifies the Confederate Constitution;

March 26, 1863 - West Virginia voters approve the gradual emancipation of slaves;

March 27, 1865 - President Lincoln meets with Grant, Sherman and Porter aboard the *River Queen* at City point, Virginia;

March 28, 1865 - Lincoln offers terms of surrender.

We're Now on Facebook...

Bruce McLennan has come up with a great initiative of the NSW Chapter having our own Facebook page, which is now up and running and may be accessed initially through our website:

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

We now need your active involvement to get the Facebook page working for us. Members are invited to go to our website and access the Facebook page by clicking on the Facebook icon. We hope you will indicate you "Like" what you see and indicate this accordingly. Furthermore, it is hoped that you might be prepared to offer some comments on Civil War issues as part of a regular exchanges of views amongst our members.

Peter Zacharatus will have responsibility for the content of our Facebook page and it is hoped that you might keep Peter busy with the monitoring and coordination work he will need to undertake.

Thank you Bruce, for this great initiative in furthering the reach of our Round Table and thank you Peter for agreeing to undertake the coordination of our Facebook activity. Members greatly appreciate your efforts in this aspect of our program.

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

Now for Something Different - A Virtual Tour of the Smithsonian, Room by Room...

Here is something special, a virtual tour of the Smithsonian Museum room by room. It's really something with a 360 degree viewing by using the cursor on your computer.

You can easily spend days/weeks looking at everything. It is just marvelous for kids and adults. You simply follow the blue arrows on the floor to move into new rooms. The tour shows inside and outside of the museum and there are little cameras here and there, which show detailed information on certain things. If you click on the floors (upper right corner) you get a floor plan of that floor and you can click on a blue circle and go directly to that room. This is truly incredible web site.

Watch it in full screen when you open it up. Use the roller on your mouse to move in and out. Look for the "arrows" on the floor and click on them. They take you to other places.

This virtual tour may be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.mnh.si.edu/vtp/1-desktop/>

Recognition of Paul Kensey's Expertise ...

Our former Chairman, Paul Kensey, has recently received correspondence from an American film producer, Joshua Norman, seeking advice on the life George Armstrong Custer. Norman, who is presently developing a screenplay for a feature film about General Custer, wants his movie to depict the controversial Custer as accurately as possible. To this end, he is seeking the get input from as many historians as possible and in his correspondence to Paul said:

"...I am aware that you have produced many research documents on this figure and would like to collaborate to gain as much information as I can..."

Norman then goes on to say"

"...Any information that you can give me will be greatly appreciated and you would receive film credit after the project is made"

Those of us who have heard Paul speak at our Round Table meetings or have had him as their guide on a Civil War Battlefields Tour, recognise him as an outstanding historian and scholar, and it is particularly heartening to see this recognition of him from overseas.

Speaking with Paul about this project, it appears that Norman has been in subsequent contact with him and has agreed to some of Paul's suggestions that had not been previously considered for inclusion in the movie.

Congratulations Paul, this is recognition well deserved!

We're Looking for Speakers and Discussion Leaders ...

At its recent planning meeting, your Committee considered the program of meetings for the coming year. The Committee was confronted with the issue of finding speakers who will provide lectures that maintain the high standard of presentation to which we have become accustomed.

It was considered the number of members who were both willing and able to provide quality presentations was not large. Furthermore, whilst external speakers do provide an excellent option for our meetings, it is often problematic to schedule such speakers with our timetable of meetings.

A major impediment to having individual members as speakers is the time needed to research and prepare a paper for presentation at our meetings. In an attempt to address this issue, the Committee considered an alternative where a syndicate of 3 or 4 members were given a topic and asked to present various aspects of the topic as a consolidated "whole" at one of our meetings.

To support this syndicate presentation, the members might be provided with resources such as a paper or DVD presentation, such as the Gary Gallagher *Civil War* lecture series, that articulates the issues of the selected topic. In this way, a proper focus is given to the topic and the workload in researching it is significantly reduced for the syndicate.

Some examples of presentations that might readily be developed using this "syndicate model" are:

- ★ *Could the South Have Won the War?*
- ★ *U.S. Grant – An Uncaring, Drunken Butcher?*
- ★ *James Longstreet – Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant?*
- ★ *The Fort Pillow Massacre*

In making these presentations the syndicate might take differing or even opposing views, thus providing the meeting with "food for thought" and a catalyst for further informed discussion.

At our meeting on March 10, your Committee would like to hear your views on the viability of this syndicate model for developing our program of meeting topics.

Importantly, if there is some consensus that this approach will be successful, we are then looking for volunteers!

Words of Wisdom...

It is appreciated that the following quote was included in our last Newsletter, but it is considered to be well worth a repeat:

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

- Abraham Lincoln

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The Melbourne Conference ...

Our Melbourne cousins have announced the details of their annual conference/symposium, which is to be held on Saturday, March 29, at:

The Celtic Club
316 – 320 Queen Street
Melbourne

The theme for the conference is '1864' and has a wide range of most interesting presentations by speakers from differing backgrounds and interests. The special guest speaker at the conference is the well-known American historian and author, Professor Steven E Woodworth. Professor Woodworth, whose photograph appears below, teaches history at Texas Christian University and is the author, co-author or editor of some 28 books on the Civil War era.



Among his more recent books are a biography of William T. Sherman; *Nothing but Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861-1865* (2005), a *History of the Union's Army of the Tennessee*; and *Manifest Destinies: Westward Expansion and the Civil War* (2010), an examination of how territorial expansion during the 1840s contributed to the political crisis that led to the Civil War. He is currently working on a short book on command in the battle of Shiloh.

The registration cost for this conference is \$50:00 (ACWRTA Inc. members) and \$60:00 (non-members), with cheques made payable to ACWRTA and posted to:

The Treasurer, ACWRTA,
44 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough, Vic. 3088

This looks like being a great conference and interested members from our Chapter should make an effort to both attend and report back to us on the experience.

An Interesting Gary Gallagher Quote

"... Overall, Union soldiers were a bit better armed, often a bit better fed – sometimes much more than a little better – and also better clothed than their Southern counterparts."

- from his 'Sineus of War' DVD

Our 2014 Executive & Committee

At our Annual General meeting at the end of last year, the following members were confirmed as the Executive and Committee for this year:

Chairman: John Cook

Secretary/Treasurer: Brendan O'Connell

Program Directors: Bruce McLennan
Philip Shanahan

Committee: Tony Kovacevic
David Hain
Margaret Neil-Smith
Jennifer Kirkby
Peter G Zacharatos

Within the Committee, it is proposed that Philip Shanahan will have special responsibility to assist Bruce McLennan in the Program Director's duties and Peter Zacharatos will coordinate the operation of our Facebook page with specific responsibility in the monitoring of all comments on the Facebook page.

A New Book on Lincoln ...

This book was referred to us by Jenny Holder, one of our members from South Australia. Thanks jenny for sharing this with us.

Abraham Lincoln may be the most "biographied", analysed, deified and impersonated figure in U.S. history. He's been seen as Carl Sandburg's mournful prairie genius, Gore Vidal's shrewd railroad lawyer who knew when to play the rube. He's been portrayed in the comprehensive histories of James McPherson, Doris Kearns Goodwin and hundreds more, and the sweeping movies of John Ford and Stephen Spielberg.

Now, Jerome Charyn has written a novel that presumes to be told in Lincoln's voice, a kind of fictional autobiography, with a mix of Old Testament, Abrahamic prose, pig-slop humor, and glimpses of majesty in a man who was also often wracked by doubt and guilt. This new book is *"I Am Abraham: A Novel of Lincoln and the Civil War"* and is authored by Jerome Charyn, who published his first novel in 1964. *I Am Abraham* is not a typical story about Lincoln. Using Lincoln's own letters and speeches, Charyn portrays a complex man who is besieged on all sides. Whether being hired out by his father, manipulated for political reasons, or trying to manage his child-wife, pressures often bring about the "blue unholies," like he first suffered after the death of Ann Rutledge. This is Lincoln brought to life like never before.

Available online from Amazon (www.amazon.com) for \$US17:04 plus postage, this is a book that will interest many Civil War enthusiasts. Any member who obtains the book is encouraged to prepare a review, which we will publish in a subsequent edition of our Newsletter.