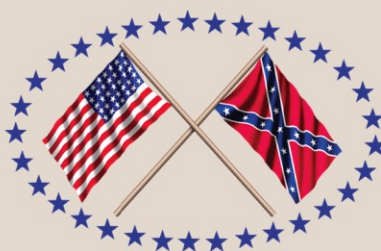


Sumter to Appomattox



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

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

President's Message

Dear Friends,

Our February meeting was an in-person affair and now we are about to have another, the third in the last twelve months. Even better, our 12 April 2021 meeting is (at present) free of a COVID limit on numbers. Our February meeting, described elsewhere in this newsletter, included 23 people when the venue COVID limit was 25. We were not sure how many people would be there, so it is a relief to not have to be concerned about breaking any limit this time.

Assoc. Prof Frances Clarke is, unlike the rest of us, a professional historian and she gave us an excellent but disturbing insight into the way that underage youths were drawn into the conflict.

Tony Kovacevic was a revelation as the popular support act (not for the first time) and he can expect to be asked to make return appearances. The short ten-minute presentations on a particular battle or person have been a great success in revealing the depth of talent within our group. Please do not hesitate to volunteer (to John Morrison) on a topic of your choice. Remember that, before all else, we are a group of friends and a friendly audience.

I expect that some of our members will not be wanting to attend in-person meetings for COVID reasons and any such decisions are respected. However, in order to ensure the future viability of our group, we need to be introducing new members.

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So, I urge you to consider who amongst your friends might enjoy being part of our quirky group with a shared curiosity about a social, political, economic, personal, family and military catastrophe that engulfed a nation on the other side of the world 160 years ago.

Please stay connected and stay safe,

Ian McIntyre

Our Next Meeting

Monday, April 12th from 6.30pm

The Roseville Club

Civil War submariners – valor or suicide

Presented by John Verhoeven

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

Hot off the Press

We're pleased to announce that our Patron, Bob Carr, will be presenting at our August 9 meeting. His topic:

A House Divided – today's America

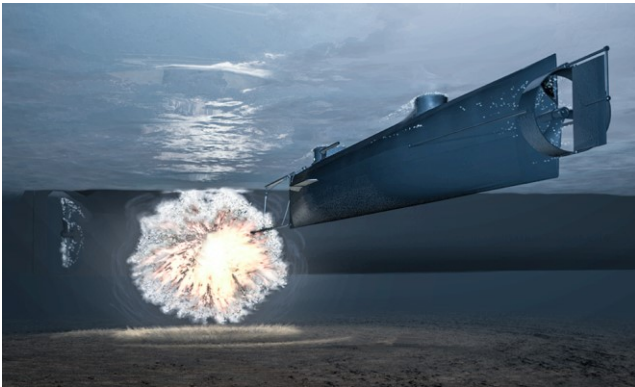
You'll agree this is a very timely topic and we encourage you to bring along a friend to should be a lively and informative presentation and discussion.

Some background on the next topic

On the bright moonlit winter's night of 17 February 1864, the submarine *H L Hunley* made history. Its commander, Lt. George Dixon, and his crew of seven Confederates silently approached the Union's steam sloop *USS Housatonic*, moored approximately three kms from Battery Marshall as part of the blockade of Charleston Harbor. The *Housatonic's* crew did not sight the *Hunley* until it was so close that the ship's heavy guns could not be sufficiently depressed to defend it. The *Housatonic* was under attack! As the ship's crew attempted to avert the attack, *Hunley's* commander detonated an explosive charge against the ship's starboard side. Five minutes later, *Housatonic* lay submerged in 7 metres of water.

The *Hunley* and its crew failed to return.....

At our next meeting, John Verhoeven will examine the development, reasons for, and use of submarines by both the Union and the Confederacy during the Civil War, culminating in the action of the *H L Hunley* at the entrance of Charleston harbour. John will also recount the fate of the *Hunley* and its crew, and its relatively recent discovery, recovery and restoration.



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

Our Last Meeting

Insurrection - John Morrison

John opened the presentation part of the meeting with follow-up comments from the previous meeting's topic: *The Meaning of the Civil War to Today's America*.

He made the point that, in the four years of the Civil War, the Confederate flag had never made it into the Rotunda. This image, plus that removal of the Speaker's lectern, were very graphic images of a horrific event. He also referred to the importance of the final words of the Gettysburg address.

The 10-minute slot

Clara Barton - Tony Kovacevic



Clara Barton, "a force of nature", had humble beginnings as a teacher and then afterwards moved to the U.S. Patents Office.

During the Civil War, at the train to meet injured soldiers, she realised many were from the 1st Mass and helped find accommodation for them. They had no supplies so she filled three warehouses with clothes and blankets to be distributed. This became her purpose.

Throughout the war she worked, exhausted, to secure supplies, visit hospitals and battlefields. At the end of the war, she was not ready to retire so she set up a Missing Soldiers organisation for Northern companies. She was able to find 66,000 letters and also the location of the remains of 22,000 soldiers, of whom 13,000 were in Andersonville.

After the war, she was contacted by Doreen Atwater, who was undertaking a similar search for missing Confederate soldiers. Through their efforts, they named 13,000 dead and made sure that all had marked graves.

Later, after recovering from her exhaustion, Barton travelled to Europe, where she met members of the Red Cross. She went on to found the American Red Cross and advocated to ratify the Geneva Convention in 1902 and then the First Aid Association.

Underage and Unfree Labor in the Union Army

Dr. Frances Clarke



We were privileged to have the opportunity to hear Frances Clarke speaking on the underage and unfree boys who were drafted in the War, often in devious and illegal ways. While this subject is one that most members were familiar with, Frances revealed many concerning features of this terrible practice.

Frances started with photos of the wartime celebrity, Johnny Clem (who ran away from home and enlisted aged 9 – see Dan Howard’s excellent biography of Johnny in the May-June 2020 newsletter). He might be considered a “typical” underage enlistee but was not typical. These “celebrities” were mostly famous because they wrote books and therefore predominate in the historical record.



However, there was another cohort who are not famous or even acknowledged. These were young black and white youths who were not keen to enlist (and reminisce later) and who experienced the war as a period of drudgery, exploitation, trauma and indeed mistreatment.

This group also did not manage life in later years. Later studies from the Early Indicators Project show that those who had enlisted early had disproportionate physical, mental and financial costs later in life. It is estimated that approximately 10% of both the armies of North and South were underage (mostly 14 - 17 years old). Many were later also refused a military pension or military service record.



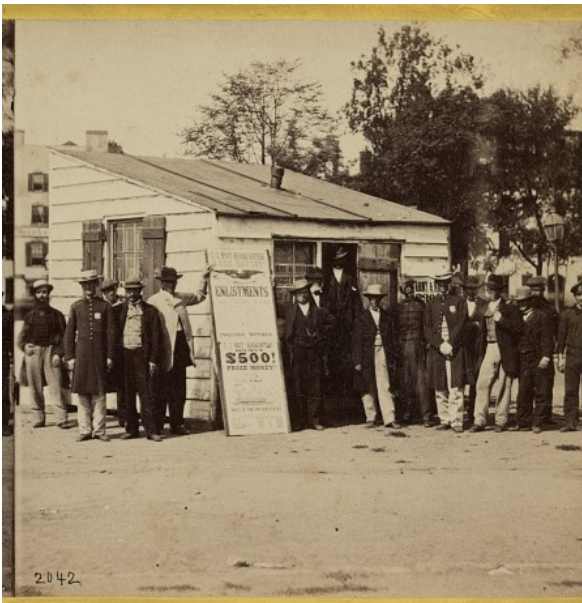
The reason for the later poor health and other outcomes of these underage soldiers can be explained by the military labor conditions of both the North and South, which were very poor.

In Northern States particularly, this the labor market in underaged soldiers was more widespread, hazardous and highly organized than previously recognized. Large numbers were coerced or kidnapped into service without any understanding of what they were signing up for. Enlistment contract made escape impossible. This was partly because, if a new recruit said he was 18 at the time of recruitment, then this was taken as definitive, even if fraud and coercion by the recruiter was involved and the recruit was obviously younger. This affected hundreds of thousands of underage recruits, some of whom thought they were enlisting as drummers but ended up in another role.

The wartime labor market changed throughout the war but, for boys and youths, the biggest change resulted from the Draft Act of March 1863. Some of the resulting changes included males of 20 – 45 being placed on draft rolls and draftees being able to pay a \$300 commutation fee, that is, the hiring of a substitute to avoid service. However, this Act was contentious because the rich could afford

to pay the fee or hire a substitute, but the poor could not.

Also, because districts were competing for labor, the lure of huge bounties led to two practices: bounty jumping and brokerage (bounty brokers). Bounty jumpers were those who enlisted, deserted and then re-enlisted elsewhere. There were an estimated 3,000 and 5,000 of these in this period but it was risky. They worked in groups and split the profits but enlistment officers were after them and those caught were jailed. It was better to be a bounty broker. Naturally, it was the young who were the targets of these brokers and their schemes. Evidence of brokers' victims show up in court martial records, newspapers and files of the War Department's National Detective Bureau.



Brokers in front of a recruitment office for the U.S. Navy c. 1863

One victim was Charles Hayward, a 15-year-old who was rejected because of his slight build but was taken to different recruiting offices by a bounty broker, who stole his bounty each time. It was perfectly legal to recruit boys, so the practice was tolerated. Often these recruits were given \$400 when the actual fee bounty was \$1000. Others would hand over the whole bounty to send to families, who never received it.

Common targets were asylum inmates and newly-arrived migrants, often living on the Canadian border, as well as young African Americans, particularly after 1864 when there was increased competition between state and federal governments for recruits. These African Americans were often ex-slaves. Prison officers from the south were known to be sent north to grab ex-slaves.

This practice led to a fear amongst young black men being followed by white men who might be bounty hunters. If they were taken off the streets by these groups, they might be beaten and imprisoned until they were impressed as recruits. All this was an open secret because corrupt officers were also involved in the trade.



This trade in both black and white substitutes continued due to the way enlistment contracts were written and also because of the military justice system itself. Brokers and officers involved were rarely tried and even if an officer faced a court-martial, his punishment was quite light. Also, they were aware that it was impossible for recruits to negate their enlistment, regardless of circumstances.



A sepia-toned portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark dress with a white lace collar and a small cross pendant. She is looking slightly to the right.

ROSE GREENHOW – Confederate spy

Rose Greenhow was born Rose O’Neale in about 1813, on a small Maryland plantation. Her father was a slaveowner who was murdered by one of his slaves (his valet) when Rose was only about four years old. Her mother died while Rose was in her late teens, at which time she and her sister Ellen, now both orphaned, went to live with their Aunt Maria Hill, who ran a stylish boarding house in Washington that was popular with members of both houses of Congress, diplomats, important bureaucrats and people of influence in Washington. She soon came to the attention of prominent and powerful men who attended the boarding house. Rose was a strong-willed, alluring beauty – perhaps even a ‘femme fatale’ - who had a strong impact upon men which she used to great effect.

“She was a clever woman, much more clever than was ever admitted by her associates. She started early in life into the great world, and found in it many wild beasts; but only one to which she devoted special pursuit, and thereafter she hunted man with that resistless zeal and unfailing instinct...She was equally at home with Ministers of State or their doorkeepers, with leaders and the led, and she had a shaft in her quiver for every defence which game might attempt and to which he was sure to succumb.”

[illegible]

An example of the cipher that she used for coded messages

Greenhow's biographer, Ann Blackman, writes that:

"Rose Greenhow was a sophisticated lady of many talents, many passions. When James Buchanan was inaugurated in March 1857, she became one of the capital's most prominent and influential women, a close friend and confidante of the president, whom she had known for years. Although Buchanan was a lifelong bachelor, there was no suggestion that he and Rose ever had a romantic involvement, none whatsoever. In fact, historians have long thought he was asexual. Yet Rose basked in the glow of her friendship with the president. It offered her entrée to the highest levels of Washington society—to the White House, the embassies, and the most exclusive salons where political gossip was traded over fine Madeira and old port. It also gave Rose a measure of influence, which in Washington is the coin of the realm. There were other men in her life, powerful men of equally great ambition. They pursued her; she pursued them. It was a game, Rose's game, and she didn't give a damn what anyone thought."

As the secession crisis grew, Rose developed a close friendship with the Southern firebrand Senator John C Calhoun and she became a strong Southern sympathiser, and as the crisis moved closer to war, her stately home on 16th Avenue (very near the White House) turned into a kind of unofficial headquarters for Southern secessionists who still held important posts in Washington. These connections ultimately led to Rose being recruited as a spy by US Army Captain Thomas Jordan, a West Pointer and quartermaster, who had set up a spy ring for the Confederacy in Washington, which he handed over to Greenhow to manage before he went South to join the Confederate Army as a Lieutenant Colonel and Adjutant General of the forces headquartered at Manassas Junction – a mere 26 miles from Washington. Jordan handed over to Greenhow a 26-symbol cipher for sending encoded messages, which she used to send intelligence to the Confederacy via Jordan.

Rose relayed important information using the cipher, but none was more significant than the coded message she had delivered to General P.G.T. Beauregard at Manassas on 16th July 1861, to the effect that the enemy, "55,000 strong," would begin their march that day from Arlington Heights and Alexandria, then move on



Photo by Matthew Brady of Rose and her daughter 'Little Rose' whilst they were held in the Old Capitol Prison

to Manassas, via Fairfax Court House and Centreville.

Ann Blackman notes that "[Beauregard] telegraphed the information to President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, the new capital of the Confederacy, asking Davis to rush reinforcements from General Joseph E. Johnston's twelve-thousand-man army posted sixty miles northwest, protecting the Shenandoah Valley. Johnston loaded his army onto trains, a first-time use of the railroad to rush to a battlefield, and hurried to Beauregard's aid, assuring that not one army but two would fight the Union at Manassas."

There can be little doubt that the intelligence Rose supplied contributed significantly to the Union rout at Manassas (Bull Run) – an unexpected Confederate victory that further galvanised and emboldened the South, ensuring that the Civil War would not be the short contest that many had supposed it would be.

In time Greenhow's activities led to her arrest at her home by the famous detective Alan Pinkerton and for a time Rose and one of her daughters, 'Little Rose', were imprisoned at the Old Capitol Prison before Lincoln ordered her exiled to the South, forbidding her to return until the end of the War. However, Jefferson Davis, who regarded Greenhow highly for her efforts, enlisted her as his personal emissary to Europe "hoping in vain" – as Ann Blackman notes – "to persuade the British and French to recognize the Confederate government, Rose negotiated with

Napoleon III and fought for recognition of the Confederacy at the highest levels of British aristocracy and government.” Rose also met with Queen Victoria.

Upon her return trip from Europe in 1864 sailing on the British blockade runner *Condor*, her ship was pursued by a Union gunboat and ran aground at the mouth of the Cape Fear River near Wilmington, North Carolina. Fleeing for shore in a rowboat with a large amount of gold coin sewn into her clothing (the proceeds of a memoir she had published in London) the boat was capsized by a wave and Rose, so weighed down, drowned. She was given a full military

funeral in the South where she was regarded as a heroine.

Extraordinarily, even now her name is recognised by the independent women’s support group of the Sons of Confederate Veterans which in 1993 changed its name to the Order of the Rose in her honour. However, in the eyes of the Union she was a nefarious traitor and was clearly on the wrong side of history.

For further reading see Ann Blackman, ‘Wild Rose’ (Random House Publishing Group).



Dear Honest Abe,

Since you must be in Heaven, can you give me an accurate number of the loss of life in the Civil War?

Thanks,

G. Reaper

Dear Grim,

I have indeed had the opportunity to do a count of all the fatalities who ended up in Heaven – some really nice souls amongst them too! The trouble is, I haven’t been able to reckon the number of fatalities who ended up in Hell as I have never been there...so my numbers would be out by at least half I reckon!

But doing the best I can, based on the esteemed work of the editors of the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Civil War, whom I acknowledge with thanks, the butcher’s bill numbers worked out about as follows:

- Union dead from all causes– 360,000
- Confederate dead from all causes – 260,000 (a gross estimate as many Confederate records were lost or destroyed)
- Disease was the major killer overall

- Combat-related deaths were only about one-third of the total
- Most battlefield deaths were due to wounds from rifled muskets during massed frontal assaults
- The bayonet inflicted fewer than one percent of battlefield deaths
- More were killed at the first day of Shiloh than in the entire Mexican War
- At least 60 Union regiments and even more Confederate regiments lost fifty percent or more of their number in a single engagement
- A Confederate soldier had a one in eight chance of being killed in action – odds that were double those of a Union soldier
- One in five Confederate generals were mortally wounded in action – more than double the rate of Union generals
- Black soldiers were mostly assigned to garrison duty, so the proportion of battlefield deaths was considerably less, but their rate of death by disease was much higher, so that their overall death rate was forty percent higher than white Union soldiers
- Two in five black, one in three Confederate and one in five Union soldiers died during the war.

Was it worth this cost to preserve the Union and free the slaves? I have my own view but will let you make up your own mind.

Yours faithfully,
Abe