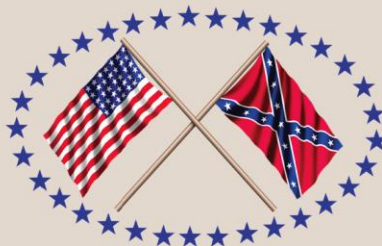


# Sumter to Appomattox



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 118 May – June 2023

## President's Message

Dear Round Table members,

Onwards to 1862!

Tony Kovacevic is going to talk to us about General George McClelland. George was appointed to command the Federal Division of the Potomac in July 1861 and then appointed to head the US Army in November 1861 but was dismissed in 1862. He has and had his critics but he also had some strengths.

Peter Zacharatos will examine a couple of battles that involved the navy a long way from the ocean at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in January and February 1862. The rivers were much bigger than we are used to seeing and very important for movement.

John Verhoeven is going to talk about the USS Monitor and CSS Virginia action in March 1862 that made all navies of the world superseded.

Please help us to update our list of volunteer presenters. Our list has been inexplicably lost and needs to be replaced.

You might have heard about the major events in the chronology of the Civil War, but working our way through it in a logical sequence reveals just how widespread those events were. At every meeting, we all pick up something new that we did not previously fully appreciate. That makes it a continuing source of fun.

*Ian McIntyre*  
6 June 2023

## Our Next Meeting

**Monday, June 19th from 6pm**

Meeting starts 7pm

The Roseville Club

You are welcome to have dinner at the Roseville Club before the meeting.

Following our theme of events during 1862, three members will discuss the following topics:

- **Gen. George McClelland**
- **Fort Henry and Fort Donelson**
- **USS Monitor and CSS Virginia**

As usual, we are keen to hear from our membership so if you have a particular subject, please get in touch with Program Director John Morrison – [johnjmorrison \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:johnjmorrison@gmail.com).

On our **Website** you will always find the date of our next meeting. Our Facebook page is also [www.americancivilwar.asn.au](http://www.americancivilwar.asn.au)

### Call for website photos

We are updating our website and we'd love to use your photos to illustrate your interest.

Please email photos for consideration to:  
[info@americancivilwar.asn.au](mailto:info@americancivilwar.asn.au)

## Our Last Meeting

President Ian McIntyre began the meeting with a welcome to Bob Carr, our patron, and to new members. He then paid tribute to two members who had died recently, John Cook and Tom Zelinka, and called for one minute's silence in their memory.

John Morrison, Program Convenor, then called on members to consider giving a 10-minute talk at a future meeting on a topic that interests them, possibly on an obscure person or event.

Our Patron, Bob Carr was then warmly welcomed to the podium.

## The Battle of Ball's Bluff

Bob Carr



Our Patron Bob Carr with photo of his visit to Ball's Bluff

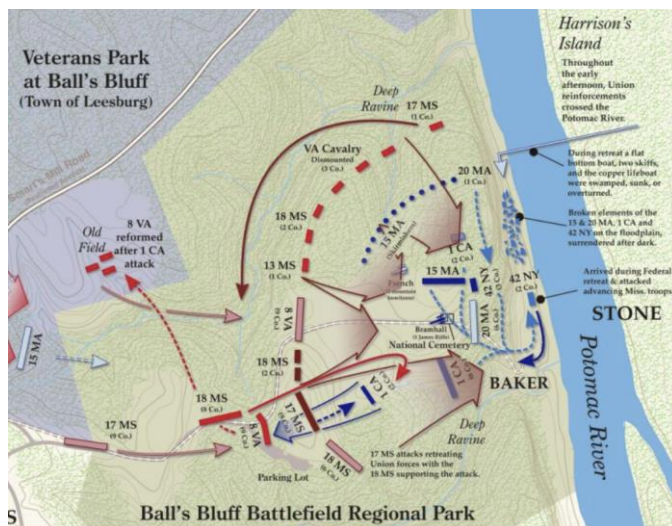
The Battle of Ball's Bluff, a small battle that took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1861, was over in a day. It was small-scale battle which reduced Lincoln to tears but was important because it led to what Bob referred to as the 'radicalisation of the North' and changes in attitudes to the War.

As shown in the following photo of the Battlefield, the landscape is dominated by a one hundred foot bluff. On that day, the Union Army of three regiments had come from the Maryland side via Harrison's Island in the middle of the Potomac River to mount the bluff.



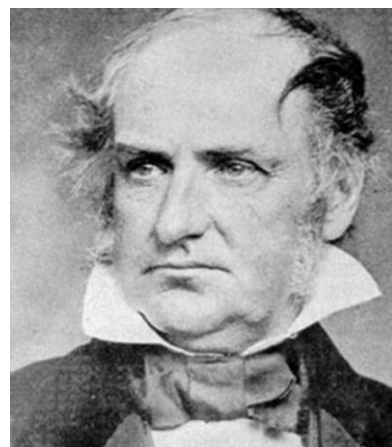
Ball's Bluff forms the background of this photo

This Union action had resulted from a request by Gen. McLellan, who wanted to know what was happening with Gen. Joe Johnson's Army – were they evacuating from Leesburg, 50 miles upriver from this site?



Map showing the site of the battle

Col. Edward D. Baker, under the command of Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, was given the task of leading the three regiments up the bluff to assess if the Confederates were evacuating Leesburg. He decided that the best strategy to ascertain this was to provoke a clash.



Edward Dickinson Baker

Bob moved on to describe Edward Baker (1811-1861), a fascinating character born in England into a Quaker family who had migrated to Pennsylvania in 1816. He taught himself Law, went west with his family to Indiana and was later elected to the House of Representatives as a member from Illinois. In 1860 he became a Senator for Oregon.

He served as a reservist in the Army, having already been involved in the Military. A great friend of Lincoln's (he was one of four in the Inauguration Coach with Lincoln at Lincoln's inauguration). Self-educated, he was also a poet. As he mounted the slope from the Potomac river at Ball's Bluff and, as he shook hands with the Massachusetts Colonel on the lip of the bluff, with bullets flying he said, "I congratulate you, sir, on the prospect of a battle". Facing troops, he quoted from the Lady of the Lake: "One blast upon your bugle horn is worth a thousand men".

Still quoting poetry, Baker was struck through the head and heart by four bullets and died instantly. What he and his men had been unaware of was that, on the ridge, they were exposed and thus visible to Confederates hidden from view in an entrenched line among the trees below – troops mainly from Mississippi and Virginia able to fire at will. Throughout the day the number of casualties mounted because of the exposed position of the Northern troops.

The Union Army had two guns, which needed to be transported from the river up the steep walls of the Bluff. One of the guns was able to be put in position from where it fired into the thick brush where the Confederate troops were hiding. However, within a short time it fell backwards down the bluff into the river. The other gun never operated because its crew were shot before they had a chance to put it in position.

The day, which had started so badly for the Northern Army, only got worse. Only three small boats were available to transport troops across the river – 25 men each time.

The mission was to see what was happening at Leesburg and the strategy had been to spark a conflict in order to ascertain this, but there was a bigger Confederate force than anticipated against them, hidden in the trees. Also, to add to the confusion, Northern troops had also arrived by land and were also not visible.

The Confederate troops were able to organise themselves for an assault up the bluff against an Army led by amateurs, reservists and a politician. The Virginian and Mississippi troops charged, and the Unionist troops retreated,

stumbling and colliding all the way down to the river, where the only boats present were full of wounded. In the melee, with bullets flying, Unionist troops displaced the wounded from the boats, which then sunk from the load. All the boats were riddled with bullets. The only wounded to survive were those who were able to swim away from the cascading bullets fired by triumphant and disbelieving Confederates on the top of the bluff. That day there were 1000 Union casualties and possibly 200 Confederate.

When Lincoln heard the news, he was reduced to tears at the loss of his friend Edward D. Baker, who had been a very good friend of the family. He had headed off to the battle with a bunch of flowers given to him by Mrs. Lincoln.

This disastrous battle had come on top of Manassas in July that year, so it added to the sense of panic in Washington and the anger of the Radical Republicans, who set up a Star Chamber-like joint committee on the prosecution of the war under the leadership of Ben Wade. Its target was Gen. McLellan because, even this early period under his leadership after he replaced Gen. Winfield Scott, there was a sense that weak Democrat generals who were weak on slavery were undermining the war effort.

One particular target was Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, who had been on the Maryland side of the river, in charge of the operation of intelligence gathering and pressing Leesburg. He was perceived to be disloyal and in contact with the Confederates. The Committee dug out information on Stone where, in an earlier operation, he had issued an order not to agitate the slaves when Union troops moved into slave-owning areas. That was taken as an indictment of him. He was unable to survive this assault from the Committee and, with War Secretary Stanton's support, he was flung into prison without any charges or a trial. Lincoln did have the political strength to release him, and McLellan was under suspicion from the radical Republicans in Congress and lacked the clout to do anything. The first ten amendments of the Bill of Rights meant nothing in this situation of political injustice.

Stone made reference to the fact that Washington could have been captured in this period when attention was diverted to him. He later, when released, went on to be given important assignments during the war and later spent 15 years in Egypt helping to train the Egyptian army.

The radicalisation of the war effort hastened the demise of McLellan and gave strength to the radical Republicans.

The Battle of Ball's Bluff had elements of so many Civil War contests – a battle for a river, a Unionists assault against an entrenched Confederate resistance, bad generalship, a confused mission, muddle-headedness and amateurism on the Union side.

Bob referred to a poem on Ball's Bluff by Herman Melville, which he did not recommend.

The casualties of Ball's Bluff were quickly overshadowed by the great battles and bloodshed of 1862, but it was a pointer of things to come, it strengthened Lincoln's resolve, and it transformed the Union's resolve in ending slavery.

Bob made a trip to Balls' Bluff and other battlefield sites with Australia's then-Ambassador to the USA, the Hon. Kim Beasley.



Bob Carr and ambassador Kim Beasley with their wives and their guide, at Ball's Bluff lookout

## The Anaconda Plan

Sandy Moore

John Morrison introduced Sandy and referred to the Anaconda Plan as being the 'grand strategy of the Union', one that the Union never really deviated from, and which contributed to the North's ultimate success. Often referred to as 'Scott's Great Snake', it was named after Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, the then-commanding officer who devised the overall plan.

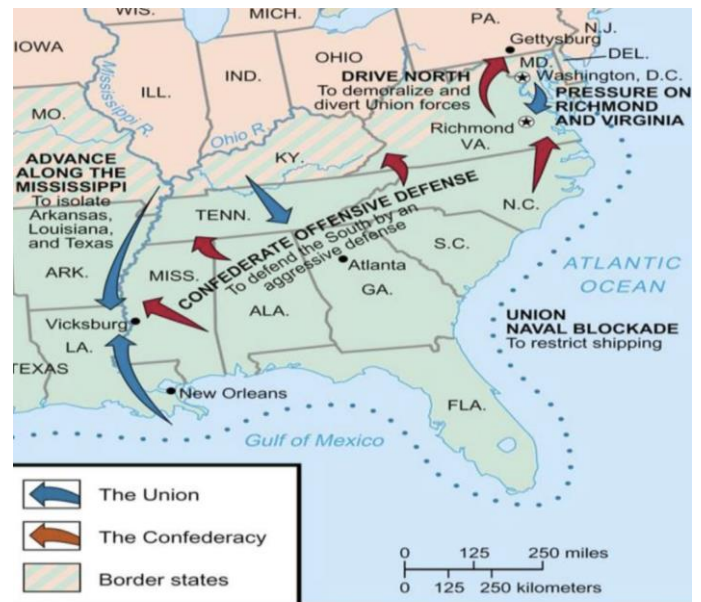
As a result of her interest in the First World War, Sandy referred to the Civil War as the 'first modern war'. Others might see it as a transitional war, wedged between the earlier Napoleonic and Crimean Wars and the later wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



General Winfield Scott

The original purpose of the Plan, before the Civil War started, was to pressure secession states into paying excise duties to the government, thus showing their loyalty to the North economically.

Scott saw that invasion of the south would be a 'war of conquest' which would be expensive and drawn out. He instead believed it should be a limited war – one to suppress insurrection and encourage the loyalty of the southern states to the north. It was generally believed at the time that the war would be short, based on experience of the Mexican War, but that war had very different features than what was being faced in this situation.



The Anaconda Plan

The Plan, as devised by Scott consisted of the following three points:

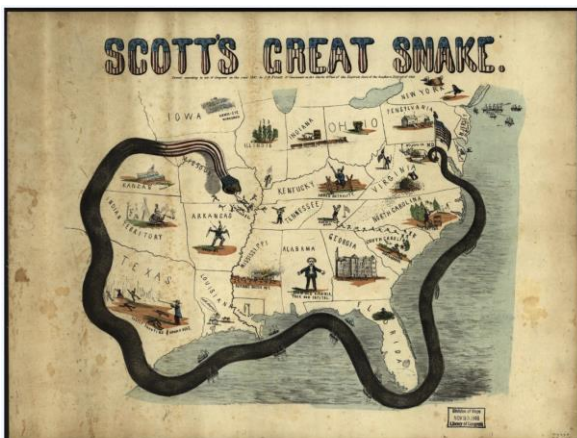
1. Blockade all Eastern and Southern Ports in the Confederate states.
2. Divide the South by taking control of the Mississippi River.
3. Control the Tennessee Valley and march through Georgia to the coast.

There were a number of arguments against the Plan (which was not strictly a strategy because of the lack of detail). The main arguments against the plan can be summarized as follows:

1. It would take some time to implement the plan, especially building gunboats and training troops. It could not, therefore, be a short war.
2. The Mexican War had been influential in its scope and short duration, but it had been a different scenario. This war had, however, strongly influenced the public.
3. The Plan was strongly criticised by the press, which preferred the idea of a limited war concentrating on capturing Richmond. A 'scorched earth' policy was not envisaged. However, there was some support for the war including Howard Greeley of the New York Tribune, who supported the 'On to Richmond' campaign which led on to the Battle of Bull Run.
4. It was generally acknowledged that a 'short, sharp war' would be a popular patriotic war.
5. President Lincoln was in favour of a limited war and Gen. McLellan opposed the plan, likening it to a boa constrictor, which was the inspiration for the famous sketch, 'Scott's Great Snake' by J.B. Elliott of Cincinnati.
6. Scott resigned in Nov. 1861 and Gen. McLennan was put in the command of the army.

This plan ran against the aims of the President, politicians and the public, which was for a limited war. This led to pressure for a land battle, hopefully over within the year.

The following famous cartoon saw the Plan as an attempt to economically squeeze and then break the South. This became part of the propaganda of the period and greatly influenced the thinking of the government.



*Scott's Great Snake by J.B. Elliott*

The Plan did go ahead and became the main strategy later in the War when it was possible to follow it – certainly not in 1861. As the War developed into a total war, with full mobilisation of men and resources, the Plan played a key role in the economic starvation of the South – which was its aim – by preventing most of its cotton from being exported to Great Britain.

This, in turn, reduced the South's opportunities to access capital and resources i.e., the iron and steel needed to build railways which became increasingly crucial for transport of troops and supplies as the War progressed. Interestingly, later in the War, ammunition could still be supplied to the South in smaller boats which could access smaller inlets and waterways. It was the larger cargoes that were stopped by the blockade.

It became a war of railways, which put pressure on the South. Ultimately, victory could be attributed to Scott's plan, with the control, by the North of the west, and the Tennessee Valley and Mississippi ports becoming a factor in the victory of the North.

Even though the Anaconda Plan was never completely adopted as a strategy, it was still put into operation. In its first year of operation, until the end of 1861, Lincoln implemented the blockade of Confederate ports after the attack on Fort Sumpter. By August, some minor ports in North Carolina near Cape Hatteras had been taken and, in November, Port Royal, a deep water port between Savannah and Charleston, was captured. That became a major base later in the war.

Despite Scott's resignation, and McLellan's appointment, the plan was implemented, especially after the defeat of Bull Run,

when it was felt another plan to squeeze the South was necessary. Its implementation was slow due to the gradual build-up of resources, especially ships and the training of crews. This was because emphasis was placed on the training of infantry for land battles, which was McLellan's priority. Unfortunately, the bloodshed of a lengthy war could not be avoided – the emphasis on land battles meant that the war became a bloody and lengthy affair.

John Morrison thanked Sandy for her very informative presentation and commented on the fact that he had not been fully aware that terms 'Anaconda' and 'The Great Snake' were pejorative terms. Sandy then said that it became a pejorative term after the press took it up.

John then welcomed Dan Howard.

## The Trent Affair – A Near Diplomatic Calamity

Dan Howard



According to Dan, “The Trent Affair” was the culmination of events of 1861 because it was not just what was happening on the battlefield that was important but what was also happening diplomatically. From 8<sup>th</sup> November to the end of December, this event was roiling as a ‘really hot diplomatic incident’.

It stemmed from the seizure of two Confederate diplomats who were on their way to London and Paris to plead the South’s cause for recognition. They were intercepted by a sloop-of-war, the *San Jacinto*, commanded by Capt. Charles Wilkes. This interception was outside the main blockade in the Bahamas Channel and the ship carrying Confederates was the *Trent*, a British mail ship that had just left Havana *en route* to London.

According to Dan, it is no exaggeration to say that this blew up into an enormous incident that could have cost the Union the war because of Britain’s outrage at this event. It was only the skill of Northern diplomats in their handling of this incident that prevented this from happening.


Within a week of Fort Sumpter, Lincoln had established the blockade as part of the Anaconda Plan. He was, however, very concerned about the effects of this blockade and whether it would prevent Northern trade with Europe, which could also lead to war with Europe.

Queen Victoria, on the advice of Foreign Minister Lord Russell, officially proclaimed neutrality, thereby formally recognising the Confederacy as a belligerent, to the delight of the Confederacy as it was possibly the first step to recognition and nationhood. The Union, however, saw it as a betrayal, considering Britain’s avowed opposition to slavery.

The legal principles of belligerency and neutrality are shown in the following table. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, belligerents had the right to inspect ships on the high seas, to confiscate contraband and to blockade the enemy. Contraband was considered to be items that would support an army, which is open to interpretation. Are ambassadors *en route* to England contraband?

The British neutrality declaration extended neutrality to merchant vessels which did not contain contraband, and which respected the blockade. Blockade running was itself not illegal but there were conditions – see below.

**BELLIGERENCY, NEUTRALITY AND BLOCKADE RUNNING IN NINETEENTH CENTURY INTERNATIONAL LAW**



**Belligerents** had three recognized rights::

- the right to halt and inspect suspect ships of all nations on the high seas;
- the right to confiscate military supplies—contraband—intended for the enemy; and
- the right to blockade the enemy.

**The British neutrality declaration** extended protections of neutral status to their merchant vessels, which could not be interfered with so long as:

- they did not carry contraband and
- they respected the blockade.

**The definition of contraband** was restricted to items directly supporting armies but was subject to interpretation.

**Blockade running** was not illegal, but if caught, seizure or destruction of a British ship and cargo was not contestable, and the British government was not liable for their protection.

The risk from running a blockade resided entirely with the ship owners, shippers and ship masters rather than the British government. The capturing power, in this case the Union, had to legitimise their prizes through formal adjudication in a duly constituted Admiralty Court which would decide the rightness or wrongness of the seizure.



*The Federal Blockade (Diagram M Moore)*

The naval blockade was so effective in that it reduced cotton exports from 3.8 million bales in 1860 to virtually none in 1862. In what is known as ‘Cotton Diplomacy’, the South was so

confident of Britain's and, to a lesser extent, France's need for cotton that they imposed a cotton embargo which they hoped would lead to British and French intervention to break the blockade.

However, this strategy ultimately didn't work because Britain and France wanted a strong United States and were determined to remain neutral. London also worried about the fate of Canadian provinces and its own ongoing dependence on wheat and corn imports from the United States. Continental Europe also had an interest in maintaining a strong United States to balance British economic and military power. By 1862, Britain and continental Europe found other cotton supplies and began importing cotton from Egypt and the East Indies. The South had overplayed its hand.

Described by Dan as an interesting and skillful negotiator, Secretary of State William Seward was a key player in the *Trent* Affair. However, he was regarded as a 'loose cannon' by the British for, amongst other things, talking of annexing Canada as a means of bringing the South back into the Union as they faced a common foe – Britain. He suggested British encouragement of rebels would set a dangerous precedent for Ireland, Scotland and the widely scattered colonies.

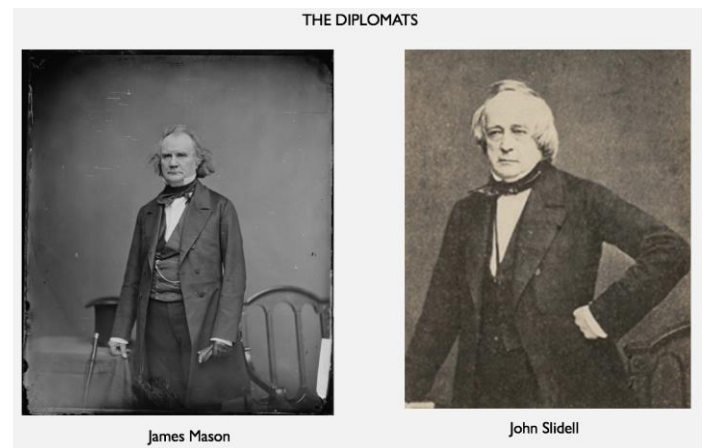


William Seward

In an example of pre-emptive diplomacy, the brilliant and skilled U.S. Minister to the Court of St. James, Charles Frances Adams (grandson of John Adams, and son of John Quincy Adams, Ambassador to France when Charles Frances was growing up), under instructions from Secretary Seward, informed his hosts that the Confederacy was an insurgency with no rights under international law. Any movement towards recognition, including failure to respect the blockade, would be considered an

unfriendly act towards the United States. It can be seen that very skillful diplomacy was being applied by both Adams and Seward.

At this point, the South, with its 'cotton diplomacy' and its run of successes, and at a time when the North was feeling less confident after its losses, decided to send its own skilled diplomats to London and Paris to plead its case for recognition as a nation. These were James Mason, a Virginian, who had been Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, and John Slidell, who had been President James Polk's Minister in the prelude to the Mexican War. Slidell was a New Yorker who had moved south, had married a creole woman, and spoke fluent French.

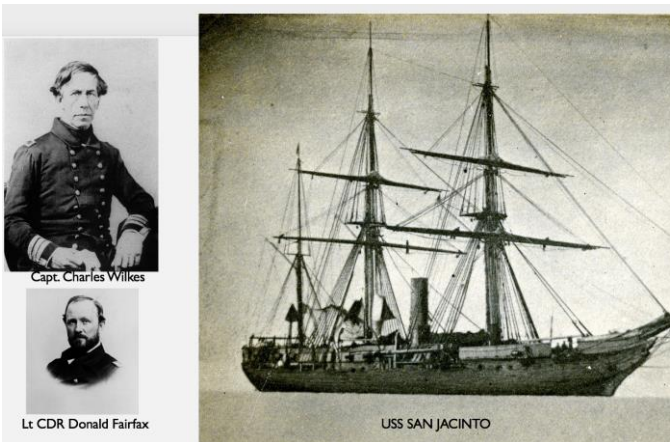


Unable to leave on one ship because of its heavy draft, the two diplomats changed plans and boarded a faster ship, the *Theodora*, which slipped through the blockade. They arrived in Havana, Cuba, and waited for a British mail steamer to take them to London.

Dan then introduced Charles Wilkes, described as an interesting fellow who had been a Pacific and Antarctic explorer in the late 1830s and who was credited with discovering that Antarctica was a separate continent. He had also spent many years on government-sponsored exploration of the Pacific. However, in the intervening years before the Civil War, he had got offside with the authorities, who considered him 'a bit of a wildcard'. He was insubordinate and never progressed beyond becoming captain of a ship. He was in West Africa at the time that the two diplomats were considering leaving Charleston, beating the blockade and getting to Cuba.

Wilkes was ordered to return with his ship, the *San Jacinto*, to have his ship repaired. However, in keeping with his reputation for insubordination, he decided, instead, to 'prowl around' the Bahamas and the West Indies to see if he could intercept Confederate ships.

He was in another town in Cuba and read, amazingly, the news that Mason and Slidell were waiting in Havana for a ship to London (this was one of the interesting features of newspapers at the time – that reports of troop movements etc. could be read about in the daily newspapers).

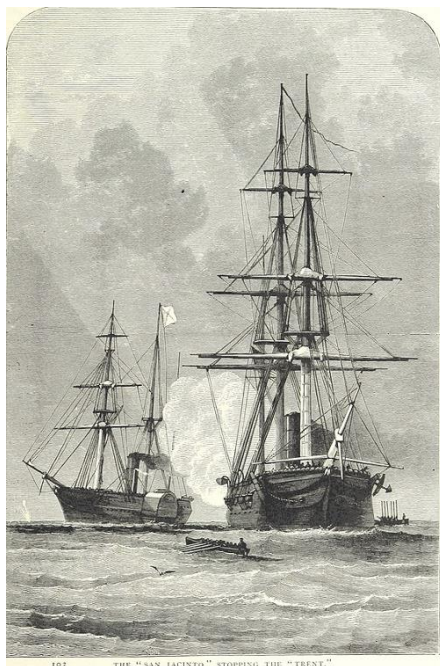


Coming on board, Fairfax was surrounded by the crew and unhappy citizens heading for London. He then ordered his men to board, resulting in a strong show of force from the Union. Under protest, the *Trent's* Captain said that what was being done was illegal, but Fairfax demanded that Mason and Slidell be taken into custody as contraband. They, interestingly, moved forward and said, "We're here" and "We protest this, but we'll come quietly". They were taken on board the *San Jacinto* and the *Trent* left. Wilkes took the two diplomats to Fort Warren, at the mouth of Boston Harbour, where they were imprisoned.

Wilkes was celebrated for this action throughout the Union, including receiving a gold medal awarded by Congress. It was the first good news the Union had had for some time.

On the other side of the Atlantic, however, Britain was enraged, especially Lord Palmerston and the Cabinet.

Wilkes decided to intercept this ship, RMS *Trent*, after it left and so sailed to the Bahamas Channel to wait. When the *Trent* left Havana, Wilkes was there. He fired two warning shots – one over its bows. The *Trent* stopped and a boarding party was sent over as seen in the sketch below.



*The San Jacinto stopping the Trent, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1861*

Wilkes' 2<sup>nd</sup> in command, Lt. CDR Donald Fairfax, decided to carry out the boarding in the most civilised way possible. He ordered two cutters, with 20 crew in each, armed with cutlasses and guns, to wait beside the *Trent*, while he went on board to order that the ship be searched for the two diplomats, who Wilkes had decided were contraband – but were they?

BRITAIN ENRAGED!

Lord Palmerston:  
"I don't know if you are going to stand for this, But I'll be damned if I do!"



*The Morning Chronicle* wrote the following editorial, which shows the depth of Britain's rage at the time:



"Abraham Lincoln, whose accession to power was generally welcomed on this side of the Atlantic, has proved himself a feeble, confused, and little-minded mediocrity; Mr. Seward, the firebrand at his elbow, is exerting himself to provoke a quarrel with all Europe, in that spirit of senseless egotism, which induces the Americans, with their dwarf fleet and shapeless mass of incoherent squads, which they call an army, to fancy themselves the equals of France by land, and of Great Britain by sea. If the Federal States could be rid of these two mischief-makers, it might yet redeem itself in the sight of the world; but while they stagger on at the head of affairs, their only chance of fame consists in the probability that the navies of England will blow out of the water their blockading squadrons, and teach them how to respect the flag of a mightier supremacy beyond the Atlantic."



At a cabinet meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November, the ministers could not agree on a suitable response to the Americans. William Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer argued that too strong a response would leave no room for the Americans to manoeuvre. Lord Palmerston countered that too weak a response would give the United States the wrong impression of Great Britain's resolve.

It was decided to leave the drafting of the letter to Foreign Secretary, Lord Russell. This letter stated the facts of the case and demanded the restoration of the Confederate commissioners and a formal apology within seven days of receiving the letter. Failure to comply would mean the immediate departure of Lord Lyons to Canada and a de facto state of war between the two nations.

The cabinet reconvened the next day to consider this draft letter. Finally, it was agreed that Lord Lyons would send two letters – the first the basic outline of the case, the second containing the threat of war within seven days. These letters would have to be sent by steamer to the U.S., taking about two weeks. The British Ambassador, Lord Lyons, would give the letters to Seward and the U.S. would have seven days from that date.

After long hours of debate, it was agreed to send the letters to the Queen for her approval. Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, gravely ill at the time (indeed this was his last official act before his death), decided that Russell's second letter was too strong and should re-drafted to allow the Americans a way out in its response.



HRH Prince Albert

He felt there should be

*the expression of hope that the American captain did not act under instructions, or if they did, that he misapprehended them – that the United States Government must be fully aware that the British Government could not*

*allow the flag to be insulted, and the security of her mail communications be placed in jeopardy, and Her Majesty's Government are unwilling to believe that the United States Government intended wantonly to put an insult upon this country – and that we are therefore glad to believe that they would spontaneously offer such redress as alone could satisfy this country, namely, the restoration of the unfortunate passengers and a suitable apology.*

According to Dan, this was clear-headed intervention by Prince Albert in his last official act two days before he died. It also showed how close the two countries came to war.

As well as needing to deal with this crisis, it was revealed to the British Cabinet on December 3<sup>rd</sup> that United States agents had been buying Britain's entire saltpetre reserves and shipping it to the U.S., leaving little for Britain. An immediate ban was put in place which would greatly restrict the U.S.'s ability to produce gunpowder.

As part of the War Office response to the *Trent* Affair as it became known, arms and ammunition bans were also instituted, with the Admiralty issuing a worldwide alert to the fleet to prepare for action. The British War Office dispatched the first wave of over 11,500 troops allocated to Canada, that is, British North America, including 7,000 who were moved via sled. They left Southampton on the 7<sup>th</sup> December. These were serious military plans which involved, if required, invasion via the two traditional routes – south via the Niagara Peninsula and from Montreal via Lake Champlain. In conjunction with the Royal Navy, there would be a blockade of the Northern Atlantic cities, which would split the North in half. These actions, combined with the Confederacy, would most likely result in a speedy victory.

This was the brink of war, so Lincoln and his 'Team of Rivals' met on Christmas Day 1861 to discuss the Affair, a meeting which lasted two days. Despite some opposition, Seward maintained strongly that there should be no further escalation. Lincoln wanted to arbitrate rather than apologise or release the diplomats. At the end of the first day, Lincoln said he would go home and come back with a written response to Seward's position. By the middle of the next day Seward had brought around the rest of the Cabinet apart from Lincoln, who, however, finally agreed that Seward was correct in his position to release the diplomats – but not to apologise. He also said he couldn't

come up with a satisfactory written response to Seward's position. This then was the final position. As Lincoln said at the time, "One war at a time".

An official response was needed to be sent back to England via Lord Lyons, who had a very good working relationship with Seward and allowed extra time for the response to be written. Seward's response can be summarised as follows:

*The United States would comply with the basic demands of the Russell letter, stating that Wilkes acted without orders and that the captives would be released. But there would be no formal apology. The envoys were contraband and could rightfully be seized. Wilkes' error was in not seizing the ship itself and taking it to a neutral port for judgement by an Admiralty court.*

In a final gibe at the British, Seward suggested that Wilkes, by seizing passengers, an echo of the British practice of impressment in the War of 1812.

However, Seward, also said that the United States wanted no advantage gained by an unlawful action and that, as far as the nation was concerned, the captives were relatively unimportant. He concluded:

*The four persons in question are now held in military custody at Fort Warren, in the State of Massachusetts. They will be cheerfully liberated. Your lordship will please indicate a time and place for receiving them.*

The diplomats were released and made their way to London and Paris. In the end, it was the inherent good sense of three men – Prince Albert, Lord Lyons and Seward that avoided the looming threat of war between the United States and Great Britain.

The idea of Great Britain entering the war on the side of the Confederacy was finally ended after the *Trent* Affair, with the two nations resuming relations. In the following year, 1862, the Union had its first victory at Antietam and this, in a way, sealed the agreement.

From this time on Britain lost its appetite to intervene in the war.



Christmas Day, 1861 cabinet meeting – 2 days

Dan's presentation was warmly received, and John asked the meeting to show their appreciation for three outstanding presentations and opened the meeting for questions.

## ***New members***

We are delighted to welcome new members to our Roundtable.

### **Call for short talks**

Our short ten-minute presentations on a particular battle or person have been a great success in revealing the depth of talent within our group.

Remember that we are a group of friends and a friendly audience. I know there are several amongst us who have not yet broken cover but who would be interesting and insightful presenters.

Please do not hesitate to volunteer to myself or John Morrison on a topic of your choice, be it short or long.

Ian McIntyre

This publication is the official newsletter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia (NSW Chapter). All enquiries regarding the newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary of the Chapter by phone on 0411 745 707 or email: [secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au](mailto:secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au)

## U.S. Memorial Day 2023



*Len Traynor speaking at Memorial Day*

The first Memorial Day Service in NSW in 20 years took place on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> May at the American Pavilion at Rookwood Cemetery. It was attended by members of the American Legion and their families as well as the U.S. Consul in Sydney. Representatives of the Roundtable Len Traynor, Tony Kovacevic, Denis Smith, Maureen Sale and Jannette Greenwood also attended.

We were well represented by our Life Member Len Traynor who, as guest speaker, spoke in detail about the life of Major General John Alexander Logan, third elected Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic and the founder of Memorial Day (originally known as Decoration Day for the flowers that were put on Civil War soldiers' graves). Len's speech was informative and given without notes, which impressed his audience.



*Tony and Len*

The Service was led by Ken Studerus, who spoke of the 100 Civil War Veterans buried in Australia, including 18 at Rookwood. The program contained details of these 18. Ken Studerus spoke of the difficulty these veterans had in obtaining benefits after the war.

### War Veterans at Rookwood

1. **William Edward Bloomer** US Navy: USS Wissahickon  
Born Maryland 1842; died Petersham 18 Jun 1896
2. **Pvt Samuel Crombie Brown** Co B, 61<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Inf  
Born St Petersburg, Russia 1845; died Sydney 20 Mar 1905
3. **Pvt John Alexander Campbell** Co G, 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana Inf  
Born New York, NY c. 1843; died Rookwood Asylum 5 Oct 1923
4. **Cpl Francis Cusack** Co A, 11<sup>th</sup> NY Cav  
Born Limerick, Ireland c. 1843; died Callan Park 18 Nov 1894
5. **2Lt William Dingavin** Co D, 3d Rhode Island Hvy Arty  
Born Rhode Island (?) c. 1833; died Sydney 5 Apr 1903
6. **Cpl George (Augustus George Hance) Graham** Co E 41<sup>st</sup> NY Inf  
Born France 26 Sep 1841; died Sydney 29 Nov 1919
7. **Pvt Michael Grogan** Co K 24<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Inf  
Born Galway, Ireland 1826; died Sydney 26 Jul 1907
8. **Pvt Karl Frederick Hall** Co K, 14<sup>th</sup> Maine Inf  
Born Baden, Germany c.1834; died Sydney 17 Sep 1906
9. **Cpl Martin Peter Hansen** Co H, 88<sup>th</sup> Illinois Inf  
Born Denmark 27 Sep 1840; died Sydney 17 Jun 1923
10. **Pvt Livingston Yort Hopkins** Co C, 130<sup>th</sup> Ohio Vol Inf  
Born Bellefontaine, Ohio 7 Jul 1846; died Sydney 21 Aug 1927
11. **QM Robert Hughes** US Navy: USS Vincennes, USS Cowslip  
bBrn Carnarvon, N. Wales 5 Apr 1841; died Sydney 27 Nov 1918
12. **Cpl John Richard Hunt** Co E, 30<sup>th</sup> NJ Inf  
Born Dublin Ireland 1833; died Rookwood Asylum 28 Aug 1911
13. **Pvt Richard Jones** Co F, 22d Wisconsin Inf (date and place of birth unknown); died Sidney 20 Dec 1927
14. **James Pettigrew Lesesne** Co A, Cadet Bn, South Carolina Vols  
Born Charleston, SC 15 Oct 1847; died Sydney c.23 Jun 1892
15. **Silas Lyon Moffett** US Navy: USS Vanderbilt Born New Woodstock, NY 24 Jul 1841; died Sydney 11 Dec 1923
16. **Pvt John Murray** Co F, 7<sup>th</sup> US Inf  
Born Meath, Ireland 1841; died Sydney 26 Aug 1908
17. **William Richardson** US Navy: USS Flambeau, USS Vermont  
Born Glasgow 1840; died Sydney 1923
18. **Sgt Isaac Putnam Smith** Co G, 84<sup>th</sup> NY Inf (14<sup>th</sup> Brooklyn Militia)