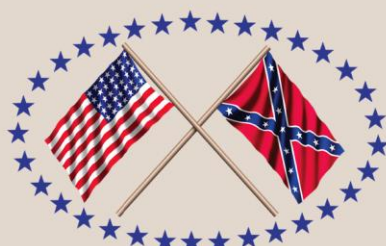


Sumter to Appomattox



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

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

President's Message

Thank you Life Member Len, Dr Lisa Brown and Past President Bruce, for a memorable meeting in April. I love getting all the favourable feedback!

This time, some of us are tag teaming in regard to the Vicksburg campaign in Mississippi. It lasted several months but Vicksburg finally surrendered to General Grant the day after the conclusion of the battle at Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

The Roundtable has come into the possession of a generous donation of American Civil War books. (There goes the garage again, Bruce.) Our door prizes can seemingly continue forever. So, remember to bring along \$5 or \$10 for the book raffle with the mission of emptying Past President Bruce's garage of books on the American Civil War.

However, some of the books seem to be too valuable for a \$5 raffle, so we will have special raffles from time to time to find a good home for special books, including some multi-volume sets.

See you on 16 June,

Ian McIntyre

Number 130 May - Jun 2025

Our Next Meeting

Monday, June 16th from 6.00pm

at The Chatswood Club

11 Help Street, Chatswood

Cost: \$35 for an excellent buffet dinner including wine on the tables

Please book by 11pm **Wed. 11th June** using the following link:

<https://www.trybooking.com/DCJRP>

Programme

1863: The Vicksburg Campaign – *the beginning of the end*

While the Eastern campaigns of The Peninsula, Antietam, and Fredericksburg were taking place, in the Western Theatre, Vicksburg, a key strategic location on the Mississippi, saw one of the most important campaigns of the Civil War. It not only spelled the beginning of the end of the Confederacy but made the man who would ultimately end the war by winning it – Ulysses S Grant. At this meeting we will consider the lead-up to and conduct of this pivotal campaign.

John Morrison and our President Ian McIntyre will give presentations on the Vicksburg Campaign including Grant's Canal.

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

Club Parking

The club offers free parking, with ample space for up to 50 vehicles. The parking lot provides direct access to the club.

How to Access the Parking:

The entrance to the parking lot is located at the back of the club, accessible via McIntosh Street.

For GPS directions, enter '12 McIntosh Street, Chatswood.' This will guide you to the general area. Upon arrival, look for the parking complex with signage that reads 'Club Parking' in black lettering. The following image should assist you:



12 McIntosh St

IMPORTANT: You may need to phone the number on the post outside to get the gate opened. There are internal stairs up to the Club (there's a door on the landing on the top level just down from the gate) or you can catch the lift to G, then exit the glass doors and enter through the adjoining glass doors.

Our Last Meeting

Our meeting was well-attended, and members were able to meet and chat with old, and new, friends. We welcome new members to our group.



Special Guest Dr. Lisa Brown Introduced by Len Traynor

Len began his introduction by referring to the different ways one can get closer to the Civil War. It can involve reading books, looking at photographs of the period or studying maps. Even more effective is to visit Civil War sites, museums and walk the battlefields. But an even better way to get closer is to study the kit of a Civil War soldier – his uniform, his musket, his sidearms and even his Bible.



Len with sword

Len then referred to the sword he was holding – a US Officer's Pattern of an 1860 light cavalry sabre. This sabre belonged to Captain Phineas Solomon, who served with the 178th New York Volunteer Regiment. It has been in the family for generations and its story is being told tonight by his direct descendant, great-great granddaughter, Dr. Lisa Brown.



Len Traynor & Dr. Lisa Brown

The Sword and The Stone – The Story of Captain Phineas Solomon and his Sword *Dr Lisa. V. Brown*

With apologies to the movie of a similar name, I have entitled this article “The Sword and The Stone” as both elements embody some of the many threads that link our great nations – American and Australia.

Nearly two centuries have passed since Captain Solomon fought for the Union with this sword. The stone in this story harkens to the final resting place of Phineas and brother John Solomon in the sandstone vault at Waverley Cemetery. Along with younger brother Henry, who also fought for the North but who was buried at Melbourne General Cemetery in 1890, the siblings form the largest family group of American Civil War (ACW) veterans in the country.

This sword was handed down by Phineas, my great great-grandfather, to his daughter, was next gifted to my grandfather and then to my mother Betty Ruth Brown, who died in 2023, age 92 years. Each successive caretaker presciently foresaw its value to coming generations, including its most recent caretakers, eminent ACW historian Len Traynor and, more recently, Andrus Tonismae.

Phineas and the Sword

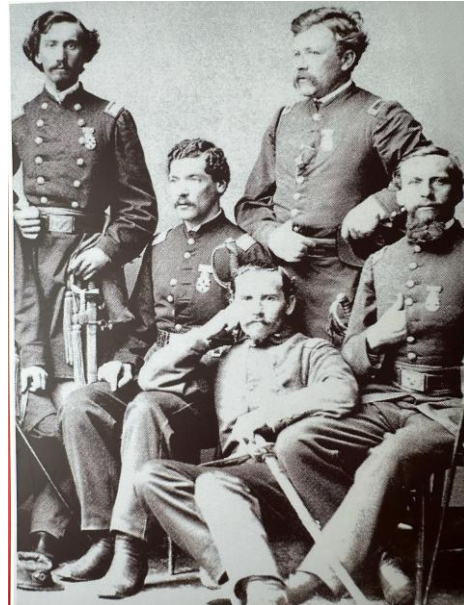
Born in Liverpool England Phineas came with his family to New York state during his youth. He enlisted in New York City in 1863 as a 1st lieutenant at age 27 years. By September he was commissioned into the NY Westchester Light Artillery.

Quoting directly from his definitive article in the journal “Military Collector and Historian”, with the permission of author Len Traynor, the following is a more detailed summary of his military career. The regiment left for Washington DC, travelled on to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and then to Louisiana.

Phineas next saw action in the Red River Campaign of Major General Banks and the Battle of Pleasant Hill. Onwards the soldiers travelled to Arkansas and Missouri, where in Nashville the regiment accompanied the Army of the Cumberland as it pursued what Len Traynor evocatively describes as General Hood’s “shattered” army to the Tennessee River.

Phineas also participated in a campaign against the defence of Mobile, the siege and capture of Fort Blakely, and Spanish Fort before finally halting in Montgomery.

Phineas takes his place on the cover photo of Roy Parker’s book, Civil War Veterans in Australia, seated in the midst of his fellow officers, with the sword guard clearly visible by his side. He and other officers are thought to be wearing the badge of the XVI Army Corps on their coats. The photo was reportedly taken in April 1866, when he was mustered out with his regiment, just over a year after being made Captain.



Phineas seated middle with sword

According to Len’s research, the sword Phineas carried was not the usual Model 1850 foot officer’s weapon but what he admiringly describes as a very nicely-crafted French-made Model 1860 cavalry sabre.

What became of Phineas after discharge? As far as we know he wasn’t seriously injured and any emotional scars he bore from service did not impede him from living a full and interesting life.

The best source of information is again penned by Roy Parker. Phineas held the extravagantly coined role of Commander of the Westfield Post of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Westfield branch of the Militia (Laflin Guards). His political ambitions led to him being a Republican Party delegate in the 1876 Presidential Elections, but no further.

Phineas was, however, more successful with his business interests in Rochester N.Y. and opened profitable cigar stores in South Bend Indiana and then San Francisco. In 1878 he visited Melbourne with daughter Almyra, returned to the US and ultimately settled in Australia, where a number of his brothers were already residing.

By this time known under the name of Thompson, Phineas became a wealthy man in

his adopted homeland. However, in 1900, at only age 63 years, Phineas died of bronchitis.

John and Henry Solomon

What became of the two brothers who also saw service? As per Roy Parker, Henry was just 21 years at the outbreak of war. Less is known about the activities of his regiment, the 10th Massachusetts Infantry, except that a portion of the Brigade left Lee's Mill in 1862 and followed the line of march of General Peck's Brigade. Discharged for disability in 1862, suffering from rheumatism and tuberculosis, Henry worked in horse racing in Melbourne with brothers John and Joseph.

In my mother's hand-written notes, Henry's poor health was attributed to a head wound but nothing is known of how this presumably war-related injury hampered his life after the war. Sadly, Henry's health failed over time, and he was admitted to what was in those days a lunatic asylum with "softening of the brain", prior to dying in 1890.

Younger brother John enlisted in the same regiment as Henry in 1861 and was severely wounded in the foot at the battle of Spotsylvania Court House in 1864. Whereas Phineas was a quiet achiever post-service, John could have become the "black sheep" of his generation. Roy Parker writes that John was fined twice by a regimental court martial for reason unknown. These princely sums of \$5.00 and \$6.50 would in today's terms each be around \$200 US each but do not appear to have hampered John in setting himself up in civilian life.

We next hear of him being involved in an illegal, bare-knuckled fight after moving to Melbourne in 1868. John, known by then as Jack Thompson, was declared the winner after a brutal fight with opponent. Lost in the mists of time is how John then morphed into a man of substance. The high regard with which he was held in the Sydney of the late 1880's may reflect what sounds to be a combination of a devil-may-care approach to life, a soupcon of charisma and warm generosity. Although he was rather doubtfully known, given his bookmaking role, to have "never countenanced a shady transaction", John's death in 1890 was met with great fanfare. John is buried alongside Phineas at Waverley Cemetery.

Following up a comment from my mother that Phineas was the model for an unknown soldier statue, I took the opportunity, whilst in Massachusetts in 2014, to visit the cemetery at Springfield. Although the statue declares it was built to commemorate those who fought for the

Union between 1861 and 1865, I was unable to confirm the model's identity. Perhaps a case of wishful thinking but a photograph of the statue taken during this visit bears an uncanny resemblance to those taken during his military service.

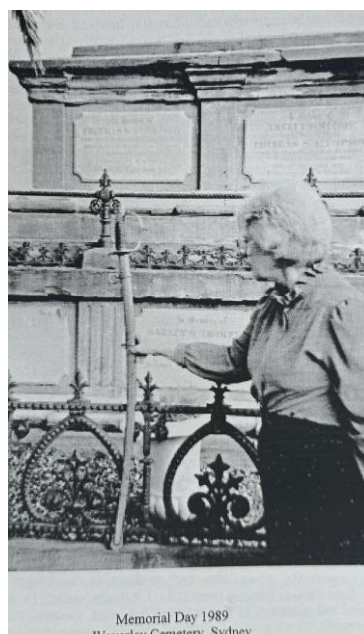


As part of the process of sorting through my mother's possessions, a VHS tape was unearthed and has now been digitised.

"Over Here, Over There" is subtitled "A Documentary History of Americans in Australia from 1778". Produced in 1994, the film contains rare footage of the late Roy Parker and also features my mother. An upload to YouTube is planned.

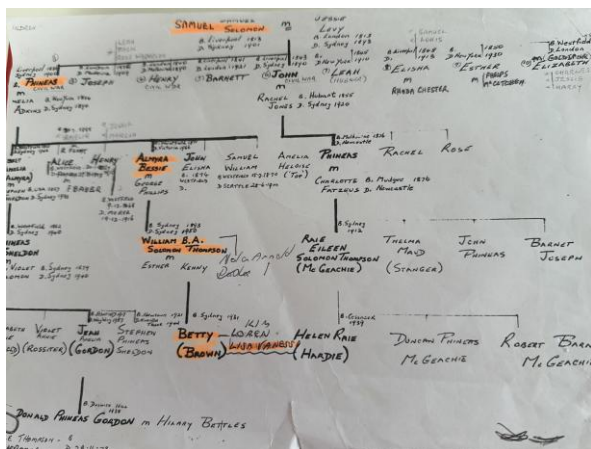
The Vault

The Solomon Thompson vault in Waverley Cemetery was, for many years, from 1980 onwards, the venue for observance of Memorial Day in Sydney. Roy Parker's book contains a photograph taken at the ceremony in 1989 showing Betty holding the sword.



Memorial Day 1989
Waverley Cemetery, Sydney
Betty Brown with sword

Late last year I took on the perpetual rights to the vault. To do so, proof of lineage was required by Waverly Cemetery. A painstaking process of sourcing death certificates for each generation was made easier by a long-ago, hand-drawn family tree lovingly prepared by the family of Helen Hardie, a great grand daughter of John.



Built around 1890, the vault is showing the expected wear and tear of a grand old sandstone dame. The next project, once a heritage stonemason can be engaged, will be a repair and rejuvenation process to ensure it weathers another century at least, before maybe a next great-great grandchild takes up its upkeep.

Repatriation of the Sword

The sword is now approaching its final journey. Len Traynor has recently notified curator Dr. Gordon Jones, at the Atlanta History Centre, of the family's hopes to ultimately donate the sword. Gordon has since indicated that it will be an important addition to a planned trans-national exhibition of ACW artifacts, which opens in mid-2026. An in-person handover to the Centre is planned for later this year.

My mother spoke about the lineage of the sword and how a walker in Waverly Cemetery noted the inscriptions on the vault and notified the American Legion of the final resting place of their country's military forebearers.

Not before, but since, my mother's death, I have felt drawn to understand what this sword meant to him and his compatriots in war, to the family members who handed on to the next generation, and what it means to us now. War is cruel but the men and women who fight for a belief, no matter if on opposing sides, tells us a lot about courage, valour and camaraderie.

If you look at the segment on Youtube that I mentioned, you will see the sword resting on a table along with a number of photographs, some of which are with us tonight

My apologies in advance for any inadequacies in my understanding of the military history of these times. In my work as a forensic psychiatrist, I am far more accustomed to speaking to a courtroom than to an audience as knowledgeable as this one is about the American Civil War. If my knowledge or understanding should falter, I seek your correction and guidance. I do not propose to give a history lesson so much tonight as to talk about the human element of war – the intergenerational story of one family.

In my work as a psychiatrist, it is fair to say, I am fascinated by what gets passed down. Why this heirloom amongst a myriad of belongings, what was its meaning to its owner and why are we all still so riveted by just the glimmering of knowledge we have of its life through time? Both the sword of Phineas Solomon and the sandstone vault where he was laid to rest in 1900 at Waverley cemetery is very important to my family. My mother Betty, whose remains will soon join her much revered great, great-grandfather in the vault, will also join Phineas' brother John.



Members examine the sword

A warm vote of thanks for Lisa's fascinating talk was given by Dan Howard.



Dan Howard gives vote of thanks to Dr. Lisa Brown

Dec 1862 - Fredericksburg and the Mud March

Bruce A McLennan FRSA



Fredericksburg was the largest battle of the War – with more than 201,000 soldiers engaged – as well as perhaps the grandest spectacle.

We will look at –

- **Geography/Topography**
- **Chronology**
- **Personalities and politics**
- **Battles**
- **Outcomes**

I'll draw on my stay in Fredericksburg and travel around the district.

Geography/Topography

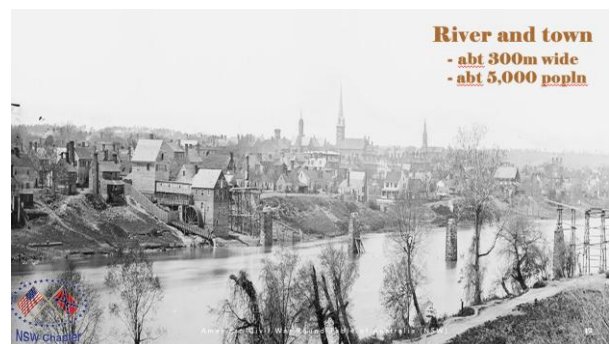
I was in Virginia in the Autumn/Fall and took the opportunity to drive the Skyline Drive along the beautiful Blue Ridge. The large coastal plain and the Virginia Piedmont made a lasting impression on me as well as the spectacular views from the Blue Ridge into the Shenandoah Valley. From Chesapeake Bay to the Blue Ridge is roughly 250 km. Washington to Richmond VA is only about 160 km. The Union had control of the Potomac River with its ports at Aquia Creek and Belle Plains.



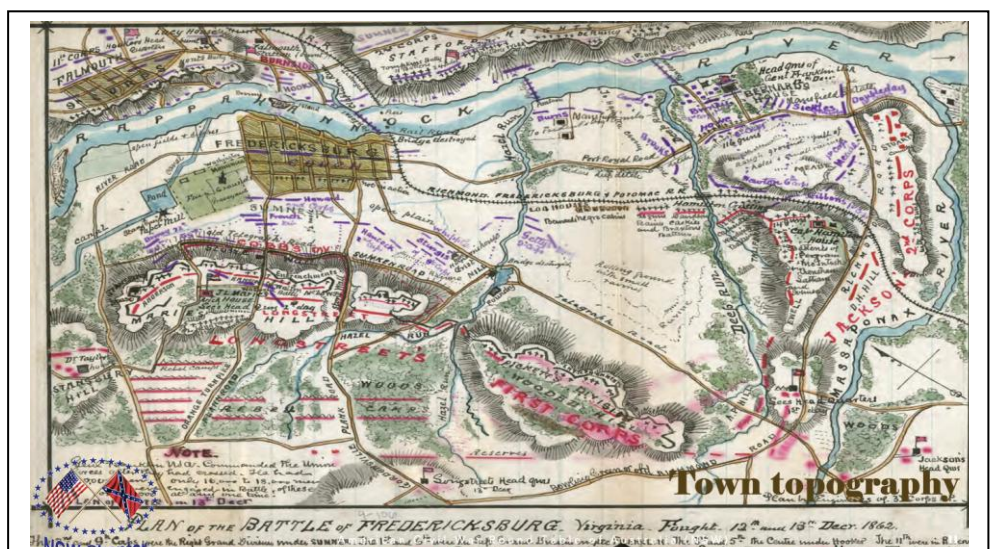
(BAMcL)

Apart from the Potomac at Washington, three main rivers flow through this area: the Rappahannock, the York and the James. Fredericksburg is on the Rappahannock – one of the longest rivers on the east coast – at 314 km. Just above Fredericksburg, the river drops, marking the end of brackish water and feeding a channel into the town for powering mills etc.

Fredericksburg had been founded in 1727 and, by 1850, had a population of almost 5,000. The river port bustled with direct trade to Europe and the West Indies. Falmouth and Chatham Manor are on the northern side.



By 1862 there were railways from the north and from the south into the town. Most roads were little more than tracks unsuitable for large numbers of men, mules, horses and wagons.



Chronology

1862 March - June – May – the Peninsular Campaign – between the York and James Rivers. In the latter stages (known as “the Seven Days”) Lee drove the Union Army away from Richmond. The Union was unsuccessful.

1862 September 17 – Antietam (Sharpsburg), Maryland – 132,000 soldiers – 22,000 casualties with 3,600 killed. Although it was really a draw, Lincoln claims a strategic victory. Lee slips away. McClellan doesn't follow.

1862 September 22 – Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation – to come into effect on January 1, 1883

1862 November 5 – Lincoln replaces McClellan with McClellan's good friend, Ambrose Everett Burnside, as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

1862 November 14 – Henry W Halleck (General-in-Chief) advises Burnside “the President has just assented to your plan. He thinks it will succeed if you move rapidly, otherwise not”.

1862 November 15-17 – Feeling pressure from Washington, Burnside moves his 100,000-man army from Warrenton, 55 km south-east to Falmouth (opposite Fredericksburg), planning to quickly cross the Rappahannock and get his troops between Lee and Richmond. Burnside chooses not to cross the low river. The Fredericksburg bridges had been destroyed, so he orders pontoon bridges.

1862 November 24 – Until this date Lee wasn't sure where a battle might take place. On this day he decides: Fredericksburg.

1862 November 25 –After bureaucratic delays in Washington, the pontoons arrive but are not used for three weeks. Meanwhile, James Longstreet brings his wing from Culpeper (56km), and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson's men hurry from the Shenandoah Valley. Longstreet's troops take up positions in the town and especially at Marye's Heights, while Jackson's men are further south (downstream). Union artillery is across the river.

Personalities and politics

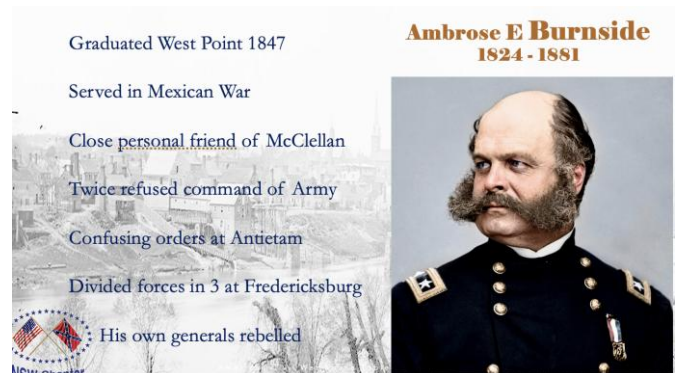
Ambrose Everett Burnside 1824-1881

Burnside graduated from West Point 1847 and served in the Mexican War. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he organised the 1st Rhode Island Infantry – one of the first units to arrive in Washington – and offered protection of the capitol. He commanded a brigade at First Manassas (July 1861). In September 1861 and

was given command of three brigades and was successful in achieving a foothold in North Carolina. As a result, he was promoted to Major General. At Antietam, McClellan gave him command of the IX Corps as well as the I Corps.

He was a personal close friend of George B McClellan. They had met at West Point – even though McClellan was a year ahead. When Burnside got into financial difficulties with an unsuccessful breach-loading rifle business and a failed political campaign, McClellan helped him get a job with the Illinois Central Railroad. McClellan gave guidance to Burnside during the North Carolina expedition.

Burnside twice refused command of the Army of the Potomac, partly out of loyalty to his friend McClellan. He repeatedly told Lincoln he was not up to the task of commanding the Union forces. At Antietam his overly precise orders caused confusion and delays, which led to great difficulties in capturing what became known thereafter as ‘Burnside's Bridge’. He's also remembered for giving us the word sideburn.



At Fredericksburg he divided his forces under three divisions: Edwin V Sumner on his right, Joseph (“Fighting Joe”) Hooker centre, and William B Franklin left. As Commander of the Army of the Potomac, his own generals rebelled against him – especially Hooker and Franklin.

Robert Edward Lee 1807-1870

His father was an officer in the War of Independence. He graduated top in his class and was an exceptional officer and engineer in the US Army for 32 years. He led the Army of Northern Virginia, the Confederacy's most powerful army, from June 1862 until its surrender in 1865, earning himself a reputation as a skilled tactician.

At Fredericksburg he had James Longstreet on his left (in and behind the town) and Thomas (“Stonewall”) Jackson on his right.

James Longstreet 1821-1904 'Old War Horse'

After graduation from West Point, he served in the Mexican War and then in the US Army until 1861. He made significant contributions to most major Confederate victories, primarily in the Eastern Theatre as one of Lee's chief subordinates in the Army of Northern Virginia.

In Jan-Feb 1862 he and his wife experienced the tragedy of three of their four children's deaths from scarlet fever. He became more withdrawn and sober.

In the summer of 1862, he had played an important part in driving the Union away from Richmond. At Second Manassas (August), he led a devastating counterattack that routed the Union army and, at Antietam, his men had held their ground in defensive roles.

Lee called him his "Old War Horse" because he was solid and reliable.

Thomas Jonathon "Stonewall" Jackson 1824-1863

Born in what is now West Virginia, he was a great-grandson of John Jackson and Elizabeth Cummins, both of whom had been transported to North America in 1749 with 150 other convicts.

He graduated from West Point in 1846, served in the US Army in the Mexican War and, afterwards, taught at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). He organised Sunday School classes for African Americans at his Presbyterian Church. His sister Laura was a staunch Union supporter.

He instilled great discipline in his men. He had distinguished himself commanding a brigade at the First Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) in July 1861, providing crucial reinforcements and beating back a fierce Union assault. From this action General Barnard Elliott Bee Jr. compared him to a "stone wall", which became his enduring nickname.

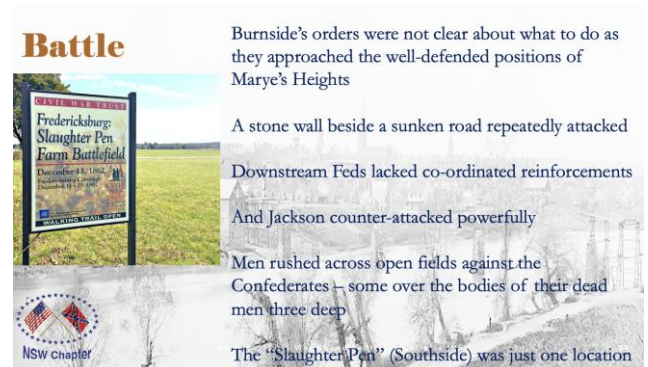
In spring 1862, he was given charge of controlling the Federal unit led by Nathaniel P Banks in the Shenandoah Valley. Though outnumbered, his understanding of the terrain, his audacity and his uncommon ability to inspire his troops to great feats of both marching and fighting characterised the operation there. In mid-June – as part of the "Seven Days" – he surprised McClellan by appearing near Richmond – after marching his troops through the Blue Ridge via a railway tunnel!

Jackson had a new uniform for Fredericksburg – a gift from JEB Stuart.

Politics

Lincoln had taken the (incomplete) victory at Antietam as a chance to issue the Emancipation Proclamation under his war powers. It would take effect for January 1, 1863, so he was looking for favourable news to help with its adoption. He hoped that the nature of the War would change from putting down a separation of the South to one of liberating the slaves. The Democrats platform denounced the freeing of the slaves, which they saw as a proposal for "lust, rapine and of arson and murder". Democrats had made gains in gubernatorial and legislatures elections in 1862 and were claiming the northerners didn't support the Proclamation. Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus to enforce the militia draft also hurt the Republicans. There was still hope in the South that Britain and France would recognise the Confederate States as a separate nation. So, although winter was approaching, when Lincoln replaced McClellan – on 7 November – the pressure was on Burnside to achieve results.

Battle



Burnside decided not to take his 120,000-strong army through the Manassas Junction (vulnerable) railroad route but instead to Falmouth/Fredericksburg, where they would cross the Rappahannock river. (In addition, he had about 80,000 more troops under his command in and around Washington.) When they arrived on 17 November there were only a few hundred troops guarding the town and the river level was low enough to ford but there was concern about the river rising and troops being unable to escape. The existing bridges had been demolished but the requested pontoon bridges had not arrived. The plan was to have three pontoon bridges in front of the town and another three 8 km downstream. While they waited for the pontoons to arrive, Lee brought together about 78,000 effectives under Longstreet and Jackson opposite. Artillery was along the northern bank.

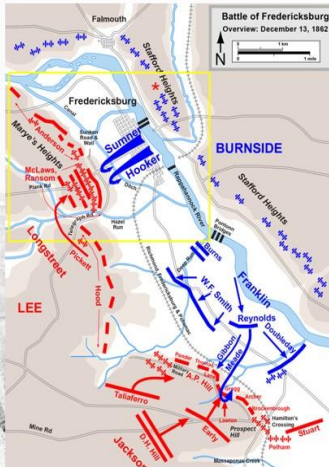
Only on 11 December could the engineers start laying the pontoons, but sharpshooters in the

Battle

Feds 120,000 men in three

“Grand Divisions” –

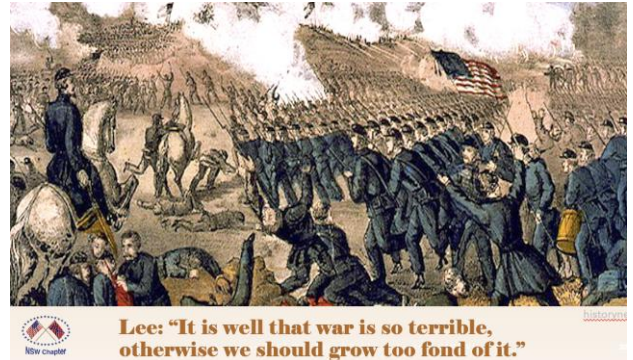
- Maj Gen Edwin G Sumner (right)
- Maj Gen Joseph Hooker (centre)
- Maj Gen William B Franklin (left)



Jackson's position downstream. However, lack of coordinated reinforcements and Jackson's powerful counterattack stymie their efforts. It is now felt by many that, if Union reinforcements had been forthcoming, they could have broken through Jackson's defence. As it was, both sides suffered heavy losses with no gain on either side – a part is known as “the Slaughter Pen”.

Meanwhile, back at Marye's Heights wave after wave of Federal soldiers advanced over open ground towards a sunken road and a wall at the foot of Marye's Heights.

Lee gave us his well-known remark: “It is well that war is so terrible. We should grow too fond of it”. But it isn't clear now whether this was admiration of the orderly field formations coming toward them or lamenting the deaths of so many. By the evening of 13 December, the ground was strewn with dead and wounded.



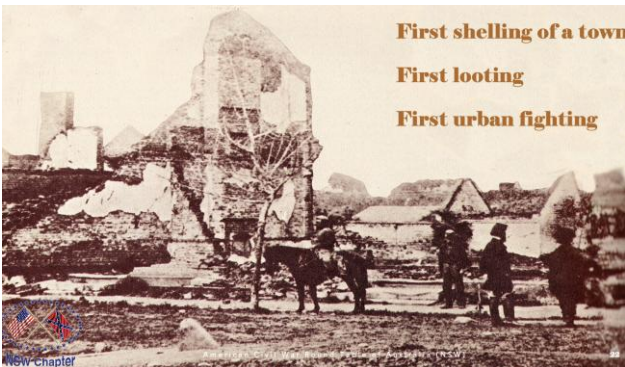
Lee: “It is well that war is so terrible, otherwise we should grow too fond of it.”

buildings easily picked them off. It was decided to shell the buildings to clear out the sharpshooters. Even after four hours of shelling the snipers remained, so a plan was formed to send an advance party to hunt down the gunmen. A call went out for volunteers to clear the town. Under fire, regiments from Michigan and Massachusetts crossed, then more troops followed. A heavy fog helped. Burnside's orders weren't clear - what was required? About 40,000 occupied the town on December 12 – Longstreet was at Marye's Heights.

Building Pontoons



The shelling of Fredericksburg was a first case of shelling a town in the War. The subsequent urban fighting was also a first. Union troops pillaged the town – many consider Fredericksburg to be the worst case of looting in the War.



First shelling of a town
First looting
First urban fighting

December 14 – Burnside was determined to renew the attack on the 14th but his senior officers (especially Sumner and Hooker) had talked him out of it. The day closed with a rare display of ‘Northern Lights’ (not usually seen so far south).

December 15 – Defeated, the Union forces in darkness retreat across the Rappahannock. Casualties: Union 12,500, Confederate 6,000.

Lee wrote to his wife, “They went as they came – in the night. They suffered heavily, as far as the battle went, but it did not go enough to satisfy me.” His anger had been further aroused by the evidence of rabid vandalism when he rode into Fredericksburg in the afternoon.

Mud March

In usually dry January, Burnside planned to ford the Rappahannock several miles upstream. Some of Burnside's subordinates openly criticised the plan. Several of his officers went behind his back to get the word to the President. Just as the movement began (on January 20), the heavens opened ... roads

turned to swamps. Large numbers of men were helping mules pull their wagons. Artillery carriages sank to their axles, men up to their knees, mules sank to their ears. On 22 January the “Mud March” was called off.

Overall: Two-thirds/One-third. With 2/3rd of the manpower, Lee had suffered only 1/3rd of the casualties.

Aftermath

All these events led to despondency in Washington – not a good atmosphere for the Emancipation Declaration to gain traction. Rumours went around that the cabinet would be resigning. The Army was demoralised. Some wanted McClellan back. The Mud March made matters worse. Lincoln felt pressure from cabinet members (especially Seward and Chase) threatening to run against him.

Burnside hurried to Washington and proposed to the President that either Hooker or Franklin and half a dozen other generals must go (Order number 8), or he would. Lincoln decided to remove Burnside – probably to Burnside’s relief – after only 77 days. Many of the soldiers blamed Lincoln for the losses at Fredericksburg.

On January 26, 1863, Lincoln appointed Joe Hooker as Commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Although Burnside bore much of the responsibility for these failures on the Rappahannock, more recent analysis points a good part of the blame to the President and his administration.

Fredericksburg is remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the War – with more than twice as many Union casualties as were suffered by the Confederacy.

A “Second Battle of Fredericksburg” took place on May 3, 1863. In all, Fredericksburg changed hands no less than seven times during the War.

In all, between December 1862 and May 1863 – six months – 100,000 casualties (dead and wounded) resulted from battles in a radius of 27km (distance from Chatswood to La Perouse):

Casualties

In all, between December 1862 and May 1863 – six months - >100,000 casualties (dead and wounded) resulted from battles in a radius of 27km (distance from Chatswood to La Perouse):

	Confederation	Union
Dec 1862 Fredericksburg	5,300	13,000
April 1863 Chancellorsville	13,460	17,304
May 1863 Wilderness	11,400	18,000
May 1863 Spotsylvania Court House	12,000	18,000
Totals	42,160	66,304

NSW chapter

A recent book examines the long-term influence of the battle on how Americans see themselves – “*A Worse Place Than Hell: How the Civil War Battle of Fredericksburg Changed a Nation*” by John Matteson. For example: Louisa May Alcott, a struggling writer seeking an authentic voice and her father's admiration, tended soldiers' wracked bodies as a nurse in Washington.




Effect on American culture

Matteson argues that the experience of Louisa May Alcott as a nurse treating wounded soldiers from Fredericksburg “lent an air of reality to *Little Women* that was largely absent from contemporary children's literature”.

Three others.

Refer Tom Dixon's talk last year.



NSW chapter

New members We are delighted to welcome new members to our Round Table.

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

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Dear Honest Abe,

I hope you are enjoying being in Heaven and that you can answer a question for me.

I heard it said that a man (who lived some years after you) once said that your appearance reminded him of the vampire Dracula. Is this true or false?

Mary

Dear Mary,

I may not have been the handsomest of men when I walked the earth. In fact, in the days when I used to be "on the circuit" I was accosted by a stranger who said: "Excuse me, sir, but I have an article in my possession which belongs to you."

"How is that?" I asked considerably astonished. The stranger took a jack-knife from his pocket. "This knife", he said, "was placed in my hands several years ago, with the injunction that I was to keep it until I found the ugliest man on earth. I have carried it from that time to this and now, thank heavens, I need search no more. My task is done."

Well, I didn't take this remark to heart, because I have always been aware that I was no beauty. When Stephen Douglas accused me in one of our debates that I was "two faced", I quickly retorted "If I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?" which brought a mighty roar of laughter from the crowd!

But as far as me looking like Dracula is concerned, I think this is an example of 'Chinese Whispers' where a true story gets distorted over countless retellings.

As best as I can figure it, this confusion arises from the fact that Dracula's creator, the author **Bram Stoker**, delivered a lecture about me in 1893 when he travelled extensively throughout the United States, in which he described my appearance quite extensively. The description started off quite unflatteringly, but improved sufficiently that I thought I would quote some of what Stoker said here for you:

"His face was a dark brownish colour partially from constant exposure to weather. His hair

was black, his eyes were grey. He had a coarse mouth with large yellow teeth".

A man who knew him and often heard him speak described him to me thus:

'He was the ugliest man I ever saw, but when he began to speak his face became transformed and what a face it was then. It seemed somehow lit from within, as if his very soul was shining through. In such moments he seemed inspired and looked almost beautiful in his strength.'

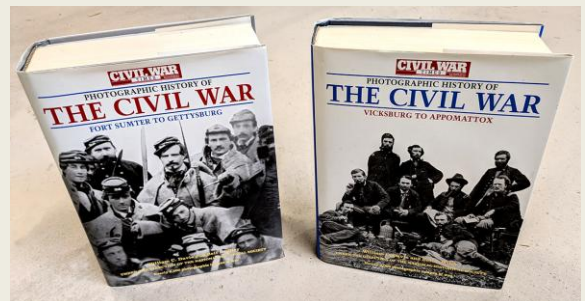
Lincoln had feet of enormous size, uncommon even in a region where bare feet or moccasins were the ordinary wear for some generations of pioneers.

He had great gifts of voice and speech. He could address twenty thousand persons and be heard by them. He was manifestly a man of the people, born of the wilderness, self-taught from the days when he followed the plough, pulled fodder or split rails. A quaint, gaunt uncouth man, with no line of beauty in the face or figure, in action or movement, and with a hand such as had no fellow save its own. A mighty hand that those who saw it could never mistake or forget. Truly a mighty hand, and by every law of symbolism it should be so, for the Almighty had fashioned it for great work; it held in its hollow the destiny of a nation and the freedom of a race.

Well Mary, I reckon if I were still alive, I could live with Stoker's description of me, and it goes down pretty well in Heaven too!

Yours truly,
Abe

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