

Sumter to Appomattox

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

No.17, September 2004

A Message from the Chairman –

I would wish to extend my personal thanks and the appreciation of our members to the Brazil family for their great presentation at our August meeting. The paper on which this presentation was based is now available to our members and is included as part of the mailing of this Newsletter. A number of members have commented most favourably on the night and all agree with Matthew's comment that his daughter Esther's singing does tend to "steal the show".

Your Committee have been most active over the past months and has approved on your behalf expenditure of \$1,000 from our accumulated funds to support the travel to Australia of John Quarsteins Curator of the Virginia War Museum to participate in Melbourne's Conference and to speak to our February 2005 meeting. John Quarsteins is a Civil War author with some eleven books published and is an acknowledged authority on the Peninsula Campaign of 1862. Whilst we will be leaving to him the subject of his presentation to us, you can be assured that it will be a top meeting.

To help subsidise the expenditure for this overseas speaker we are proposing to conduct a giant Xmas raffle (oops, sorry guessing competition) and we are hoping that each member might take a small book of tickets to sell to family and friends. The prize is to be a Christmas hamper containing a range of high quality goods including a number of gift vouchers, some fine wines, women's and men's toiletries, DVDs, some quality gourmet Xmas foods, gifts for the children etc. The value of the prize will be in excess of \$1,000.

Planning for next year's conference is already underway and your Committee is proposing to have as the Conference theme:

"Appomattox and Beyond"

The Conference is to be held on Saturday, July 2, 2005 at the Gordon Club, Chatswood and, to date, a number of speakers have indicated their willingness to be part of the program. Further details of this Conference will be conveyed to members as they are become known but you are asked to "pencil" the date into your 2005 diary.

We are proposing for 2005 to change the night of our meeting back to a Monday night, subject, of course to there being a meal available at the Club on Mondays. The reason for this change is that the Committee considers Monday nights are less busy than Wednesday and that, as a consequence, there will be less noise to disrupt our meetings. If any member has a dissenting view to this proposal, please speak to me ASAP so that further consideration to the issue might be given.

For our next meeting in October, your Committee has decided to provide on a trial basis more time for members to socialise over dinner and to enable those working late to arrive in time for the meeting by starting the meeting 30 minutes later at 7:30 pm. Please let me know your reaction to this initiative to enable a decision to then be taken on whether this later timing should be extended to subsequent meetings.

An earlier decision of your Committee was to bring forward the election of the Executive Officers and Committee to the last meeting of this year. This will enable a new Executive and Committee to be in place to plan the program for 2005 and, in particular, to put in place the detailed arrangements for the July Conference. If you are thinking of putting your name forward for a position either as one of the Executive or as a Committee member, we would welcome your nomination, particularly if you are a "new face".

Work on the development of our Chapter's web-site is proceeding under the expert eye of Bruce McClellan. Members can expect something really special to emerge shortly. Associated with this development has been the decision of the Committee to formalise the organisation of the Chapter by seeking to have us incorporated as an association with NSW Government. This was completed on July 26, with our having to nominate a "Public Officer" for the Chapter. I am very happy to announce that Terry Cartwright has accepted this position.

Lastly, there are a small number of our members who have yet to pay their subscription for 2004-2005. I would ask those in this situation to respond to our Secretary/Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell, at their earliest convenience.

Paul Kensey

Next Month's Meeting

IMPORTANT! NOTE THE CHANGE OF TIME FOR THE MEETING

Our next meeting for this year is to be held at our normal venue, the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Wednesday, October 20, 2004**.

It is proposed to start the meeting's proceedings at **7:30pm** rather than 7pm as in previous meetings. Your Committee has introduced this change on a trial basis to give members more time to socialise over dinner and to enable those who are working late to arrive before the proceedings commence.

It is intended that members will be able to meet at the Club **from 6pm for a bistro style meal**.

The speaker for this meeting will be Sean Young, who is presently President of the ACWRTA in Melbourne. Sean's presentation will be:

"Joseph E Johnston's Generalship During the Atlanta Campaign"

Members living outside the Sydney Metropolitan Area will have the paper associated with Sean's presentation mailed out automatically with the next Newsletter in November.

It Happened in October

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

October 1, 1864 - Famed Confederate spy, Mrs Rose Greenhow drowns as she tries to avoid capture;

October 2, 1800 – Nat Turner, slave and leader of slave insurrection at Southampton, Virginia in 1831 is born in Southampton County;

October 26, 1864 – Confederate guerrilla Bloody Bill Anderson is killed in an ambush near Richmond, Missouri.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

October 8, 1864 –General William T Sherman is named to command the Union Department of the Cumberland, with headquarters at Louisville;

COMMAND APPOINTMENTS cont'd

October 11, 1861 – Brigadier General William R Rosecrans assumes command of the Federal Department of Western Virginia;

October 28, 1862 – Brigadier General John C Breckinridge assumes command of the Army of Middle Tennessee

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

October 16, 1859 – The abolitionist John Brown leads an unsuccessful raid on the government arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

October 19, 1831 – A small Confederate raiding party robs three Vermont banks of over \$200,000.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

October 4, 1862 – The Battle of Corinth, Miss., ends with a Confederate withdrawal from this important rail and road centre;

October 5, 1863 – Confederate torpedo boat *David* with a four man crew, attacks Federal ironclad *New Ironsides* outside Charleston Harbour;

October 6, 1861 – Confederate blockade runner *Alert* is captured by the Federal Navy off Charleston, S.C.;

October 7, 1864 – *USS Wachusett* captures the raider *CSS Florida* in a controversial action at Bahia, Brazil;

October 9, 1864 – Union cavalry under Custer and Merritt engage and rout Confederates at Tom's Brook (Round Top Mountain), Virginia;

October 14, 1863 – Confederates strike retreating Federals at Bristow Station, Va., in an inconclusive engagement;

October 18, 1862 – John Hunt Morgan and his Confederate raiders defeat Federal cavalry near Lexington, Kentucky;

October 21, 1861 – Federal forces suffer a dramatic defeat at the Battle of Ball's Bluff (Leesburg), Virginia;

October 22, 1862 – Confederate cavalry capture London, Kentucky;

October 23, 1864 – Last Confederate effort in Missouri ends in defeat at the Battle of Westport;

October 27 1864 – In a daring raid, Union Lieutenant William B Cushing and a 15-man crew sink the Confederate ironclad *Albemarle* at Plymouth N.C.;

October 29, 1861 – Largest combined land-sea expedition ever mounted by the United States leaves Hampton Roads, Va., for the Carolina coast and Port Royal.

It Happened in October cont'd

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

October 3, 1863 – Federal War Department orders enlistment of Negro troops in the slave states of Maryland, Missouri and Tennessee;

October 10, 1862 – President Davis asks Virginia for a draft of 4,500 Negroes to work on the completion of fortification of Richmond;

October 12, 1861 – The first ironclad of the Union navy, the gunboat *St Louis* is launched at Carondelet, Missouri;

October 13, 1864 – Maryland voters narrowly adopt a new state constitution abolishing slavery;

October 15, 1863 – In Charleston Harbour Confederate submersible *H L Hunley* sinks for a second time during a practice dive. Seven men, including Hunley, its inventor die;

October 17, 1863 – President Lincoln issues a proclamation calling for 300,000 more volunteers for Federal armies;

October 20, 1864 – President Lincoln proclaims the last Thursday in November "...a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to Almighty God";

October 24, 1861 – Western Union completes the first transcontinental telegraph;

October 25, 1861 – The keel of the ironclad *USS Monitor* is laid at Greenpoint, Long Island;

October 31, 1864 – Nevada becomes the 36th state of the Union.

Do Things Ever Change?

Major General William Tecumseh Sherman is quoted as saying:

"... I have realized in our country one class of men makes war and leaves another to fight it out"

Does this situation ever change?

This publication is the official newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia. All inquiries regarding the Newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter by telephone on 9449 3720 or at PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 75 or by e-mail to bpoconn@bigpond.com

Yingling Farm in Gettysburg Changes Hands

This article comes from the Civil War News, September 2004 via Jenny Holder, one of South Australian members and is a follow-up to an article appearing in the last issue of our Newsletter

"The Yingling Farm, for several years the site of major re-enactments of the battle of Gettysburg, was sold in July for \$2.9 million. The 277 acre tract will be largely preserved under a deal that removes most of the development rights. The new owner, Gettysburg native Tim Shields, had plans for as many as six 20 acre residential lots. Shields, a Manhattan-based paper broker, already owns 77 acres and a second home abutting the Yingling Farm. He has said that he will sell that home and move into a historic farmhouse on the Yingling property. The purchase included an agreement with the Land Conservancy of Adams County, which will pay Shields \$100,000 for the easement limiting development. The conservancy's interest in the property stems from the ongoing charge to protect the watershed of Marsh Creek, which runs past the farm. Shields, whose grandfather operated a battlefield museum and two of whose uncles were battlefield guides, said he made the purchase out of fear that the farm would be developed. He has said that any houses that will be built on the property will be shielded from view, and that re-enactments will be allowed to continue."

While on the surface, this seems to be great news, Mr. Shields would not be the 1st developer to lie to the news media and then go ahead and fill a farm up with houses. Let's all hope he is a man of integrity and will keep his word.

On another note about the future of the battle re-enactment, due to the poor treatment a lot of units received this past year, including harassment by local fire police and other hired security and poor management by the sponsors, many units are saying they will be pulling out of the event for 2005. My own unit's experience was not good, especially the different battle problems I've already reported to you. We are discussing pulling out as well. And so is most of the Artillery Reserve. Now, mind you, this is all just talk right now. When schedules are made over the winter months, a lot of things can and will change. One thing that I personally think would help is if the event started to be every other year, similar to the once every 5 year Battle of Antietam Creek. It would give the sponsors more time to plan things out correctly and also give the units something special to look forward to. Right now, it is just the same old thing, year after year after year."

Tom Bowman
Proud Son of Union Veteran
Pvt. William Bowman
210th Pennsylvania Infantry
My Great Grandfather

Military Intelligence in the Civil War

Although there have been over 50,000 books and pamphlets written about America's Civil War there is a dearth of historical researched publications in the area of 'military intelligence'. There is a sad array of what can only be described as "potboilers" that come from the memoirs of men and women who claimed, not all of them truthfully, to have been spies for the Union or Confederacy. Furthermore, later writers have added to the numerous fictions and the occasional facts in these memoirs with the resulting product focusing on the spies' trials and tribulations and where it refers to the outcome of battles exaggerates the contribution of the spy and provides little or no insights into the force commander's decisions and actions.

'Military Intelligence' can be thought of as the art of knowing one's enemies. It involves the process of collection, collation, analysis and interpretation for an army commander of information of the enemy and the battlefield environment that must be confronted.

Until the 19th Century 'military intelligence' was only practised in times of war, its methods of collection, analysis and interpretation were quite primitive and commanders tended to be sceptical about the reliability of information received from various sources (spies, scouts, own troops). The United States did not acquire a permanent peacetime intelligence organisation until 1885 some 20 years after the end of the Civil War and the oldest of today's military intelligence units can trace its lineage back only as far as the eve of World War II. The US Army did not recognise formally intelligence as a distinct professional discipline until 1962 and today's Military Intelligence Corps incorporating all military intelligence personnel and units into a single, large regimental structure did not come into existence until 1987.

Sometimes intelligence activities are seen as being restricted to spying and espionage. Whilst such activities are significant components of intelligence, particularly the collection phase, there are other activities, also, that are considered basic to the process.

It was in October 1959, nearly a century after the Civil War that a remarkable discovery was made at the National Archives in Washington. The late Edwin C Fishel found amongst miscellaneous records of the Army of the Potomac the operational files of that Army's Bureau of Military Information. These files, which had been undisturbed since the end of the War 94 years before, were to form a basis for the first authentic history of military intelligence in the Civil War. Fishel went on to examine other sources for his historical research including reports by Alan Pickerton contained in George McClellan's papers and privately held papers of Joseph Hooker, who set up the Bureau of Military Information in 1863. Using his some 30 years' experience in the US intelligence service, Fishel was able to craft an "intelligence history" of eight of the major Civil War campaigns and for the first time, provide answers to some of the most tantalizing "whys" of the War.

Fishel's analyses provided, also, a most useful listing of successes and failures of both Federal and Confederate intelligence up to and including the Gettysburg Campaign.

Fishel's book, *"The Secret War for the Union – The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War"*, published by Houghton Mifflin Company in 1988, is regarded by many Civil War scholars as the "bible" on intelligence and is highly recommended to anyone who wishes to read more on the subject of military intelligence in the Civil War era.

This area of Civil War history is considered likely to interest many of our members and, to this end, a presentation titled:

"Neither an Exact Science nor a Oxymoron Military Intelligence in Civil War Times"

Is scheduled for one of our meetings in the near future.

National Pride

Civil War veteran John Keogh was one of the marines stationed at Norfolk, Va, in 1866. Immensely proud of his Irish heritage, he stuck a sprig of shamrock in his cap on St Patrick's Day.

It was long before an officer spotted this unauthorised addition to his uniform and ordered Keogh to remove it. Perhaps this officer was a stickler for regulations or was just "culturally insensitive". Keogh refused and the officer persisted. Keogh declared, "I am a son of Erin. It is an emblem of my country. I'll be god-damned if I'll take it out for you or any god-damned man in your bloody country."

Neither amused, impressed nor assuaged by Keogh's reply, the officer preferred charges.

For his little demonstration of national pride, Keogh got two years.

Source: North and South, Volume 7, No. 2.

Famous Last Words

*"If victorious, we will have everything to live for.
If defeated, there will be nothing to live for."*

- General Robert E Lee
on May 4, 1864

*"If the North can march an army right through the
South, it is proof that the North can prevail ,,,
I will not attempt to send couriers back but trust
to the Richmond papers to keep you advised"*

- General William Tecumseh Sherman
November 1864 to General Grant