

Sumter to Appomattox

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

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A Message from the Chairman –

In my message to members in the last Newsletter I suggested that this year "...promises to be a big year for the NSW Chapter of ACWRTA". This is certainly being born out with the presentation at our last meeting by the distinguished American historian, John Quarstein, the Director of the Virginia War Museum and author of a number of Civil War books. Quarstein provided us with a rare mix of passion for the subject and a knowledge and understanding of both the detail and "big picture" perspectives of the conflict as he spoke to us about the 1862 Peninsula Campaign. A number of members who attended this meeting have voiced their view that this first move by your Committee to have an overseas' speaker was certainly worth the investment made.

There is more to come this year with the Conference scheduled for Saturday, July 2, shaping up as our best yet. The theme of the conference is *Appomattox and Beyond* and your Committee has been able to attract some first class speakers to participate in a most interesting aspect of the War and its aftermath.

I would wish to thank those members who helped me cull my Civil War library and purchased books, the proceeds of which went to the Beverly Hills (NSW) Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society to support its work in helping those in our local community in need. I have undertaken a further cull of my library and am offering at bargain prices a number of Civil War publications with proceeds again going to Vinnies. If you are interested have a look at the listing of publications on the back page of this Newsletter.

Lastly, I would want to give early warning of the Memorial Day commemoration that we have become part of in recent years. Memorial Day has become the day on which all deceased American War Veterans are honoured. In Sydney, a service has been held each year since 1980 in Waverley Cemetery at the Solomon Thompson gravesite, where three of ten Civil War veterans are buried. In previous years, a number of our members have attended this commemoration and I hope this year will be well represented. A notice giving details of the service is presented on this page.

Paul Kensey

Our Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be held at our normal venue, the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Monday, April 11, 2005, with members**, as usual, members being able to meet at the Club **from 6pm for a bistro style meal**.

This meeting is going to be something quite different from our usual format with it being:

A Giant Civil War Quiz

The proceedings for the night will be under the direction of our Master of Ceremonies and fount of all knowledge on matters Civil War, **Len Traynor**. Len will not only provide the questions but will adjudicate on any disputes to the correct answers.

It is proposed to group members into teams of 4 or 5 members, with the quiz presented as a series of themed questions – Union/Confederate generals, their horses, Civil War music, movies with a Civil War theme etc.

You have the option of forming a team yourself or being allocated to one on the night. Please remember this is a fun night and whilst there will be a variety of prizes, we won't be playing for the sheep station!

Your Committee hopes that all members will make an extra effort to come to this meeting.

Memorial Day Commemoration

This year the Memorial Day commemoration will be held at the Solomon Thompson Gravesite in Waverley Cemetery on Sunday, May 29, commencing at 1pm. The commemoration will be then followed by afternoon tea at the Bronte RSL Club, McPherson Street, Bronte.

It is hoped that as many members of our Chapter will be able to attend this short but very moving ceremony and that we will participate actively in the commemoration by laying a wreath during the service

It Happened in April

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

April 2, 1865 – Confederate general A P Hill is killed outside Petersburg, Virginia;

April 5, 1839 – Robert Smalls (USN), the only African American naval captain during the Civil War is born in Beaufort, S.C.;

April 15, 1865 – President Lincoln dies at 7:22am after being shot the previous night at Ford's Theatre by John Wilkes Booth;

April 26, 1865 – John Wilkes Booth is shot and killed;

April 27, 1822 – Ulysses S Grant is born at Point Pleasant, Ohio.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

April 15, 1865 – Andrew Johnson sworn in as President after Lincoln's death;

April 22, 1861 – Robert E Lee is named commander of the forces of Virginia;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

April 1, 1865 – At the Battle of Five Forks Lee's forces are defeated by the Union army, which now threatens his route of retreat;

April 3, 1865 – Federal troops occupy Richmond and Petersburg;

April 6, 1865 – The last major engagement between the Army of Northern Virginia (Lee) and Army of the Potomac (Grant) occurs at Saylor's Creek, Virginia;

April 8, 1864 – Nathaniel Banks' Federals "skedaddle" from Richard Taylor's Confederates at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads, La;

April 11, 1861 – Confederate representatives visit Fort Sumter and demand its surrender;

April 12, 1861 – Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor is fired on thus beginning the War;

April 13, 1861 – After 24 hours of bombardment, the Union Force within Fort Sumter is forced to surrender.

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, 2075 or by e-mail to bpoconn@bigpond.com

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

April 2, 1865 – The Confederate government evacuates Richmond;

April 9, 1865 – Confederate General Robert E Lee surrenders to Union General Ulysses S Grant at Appomattox Court House;

April 17, 1861 – Virginia adopts an ordinance of secession;

April 17, 1865 - Joseph E Johnston surrenders to Sherman near Durham Station N.C.;

April 18, 1865 – Johnston and Sherman sign "a memorandum or basis of agreement" calling for an armistice by all armies in the field;

April 19, 1865 – Funeral services held for Lincoln;

April 21, 1865 – The train bearing Lincoln's body leaves Washington for Springfield, Illinois;

April 24, 1865 – President Johnson rejects the terms of agreement of Sherman and Johnston and directs that hostilities must resume if there is no surrender;

April 26, 1865 – General Johnston formally surrenders troops under his command to General Sherman;

Two Great Books

For those of you who have read any of the writings of the eminent Civil war historian Gary W Gallagher there are two books currently available that will be of interest.

The first of these is a newly published (2004) set of essays edited by Dr Gallagher that examines the lives and command decisions of eight Confederates who held the rank of full general and at the impact they had on the conduct and ultimate outcome of the War. This book, *Leaders of the Lost Cause, New Perspectives on the Confederate High Command*, casts aside many of the old myths and assumptions about the War and offers new insight into the men of the South on whose shoulders the weight of prosecuting the War would fall.

Priced at \$US16:47 (plus postage) for the hard cover edition through "Amazon.com", this book is great value!

The second of these books, *The Confederate War*, was first published in 1997 and is taken from a series of lectures Dr Gallagher gave in 1995 – 1996. The book, published by Harvard University Press, challenges much of the Civil war writings by suggesting that we should not be asking why the Confederacy collapsed so soon but rather how it lasted so long.

The paperback edition of this book sells for \$US11:87 through Amazon and is highly recommended for anyone wanting to undertake serious study of the Confederate perspective of the War.

The Einstein Factor

Members may have watched the television quiz show on the ABC at 6:30 on Sunday nights where three contestants answer questions areas of special interest and then compete against each other and a “brains-trust” on a series of nominated topics. Initially, each contestant has 90 seconds to answer up to 15 questions on their area of special interest, followed by a bonus question that can be answered by either the contestants themselves or for extra points can be given to the brains-trust.

In Episode 3 of the current series, screened on Sunday, February 27, a David Bridge from Tasmania had as his area of special interest “American Civil War, 1861 – 65”. Given our proposed giant quiz at our next meeting, it was considered opportune to list the questions asked on this particular show together with the answers.

Question 1: The longest siege of the War was of which Confederate stronghold that fell a few days after Vicksburg fell?

Question 2: Breaking away from a state that seceded was which state admitted to the Union in 1863?

Question 3: Nicknamed ‘Old Salamander’ was which Union hero, America’s first Admiral?

Question 4: Shortly after taking Forts Henry and Donelson in February 1862, Grant aimed to attack which railroad?

Question 5: What were the given names of Confederate General “Stonewall” Jackson?

Question 6: Capturing, sinking or burning scores of Union ships was which cruiser commanded by Raphael Semmes?

Question 7: Repealed in 1864 were which acts providing for the return of slaves who escaped from one state to another?

Question 8: The Confederate Secretary of War in 1865 was which Major General and former US Vice-President?

Question 9: The capture of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge ended the Confederate siege of Union troops at which vital rail junction?

Question 10: The Battle of Murfreesboro is also known by what name?

Question 11: Featured in the film ‘Glory’ was the attack on Fort Wagner by which black volunteer Regiment?

Bonus Question: More Confederate than Union troops died during the American Civil War - True or False?

Well, how many questions were you able to answer without looking at a reference book? The answers are on the back page.

Military Blunders – The Mud March

Mud is no friend to any commander. In the Civil War, Ambrose Burnside’s famous “Mud March” after the Union defeat at Fredericksburg in late 1862 provided an air of farce now associated with him. After the slaughter at Marye’s Heights, Burnside’s army settled down behind the Rappahannock River in Virginia for a wet and dismal Christmas in the open.

A period of dry weather early in 1863 convinced Burnside that he should be looking for a new crossing point to engage the Confederates again. He had his army was on the move by January 20, 1863, but no sooner had the army started its march than the heavens opened up with continuous torrential rain. As the Union forces waded through the mud, the artillery guns sank into the quagmire never to be seen again and the pack animals carrying the army’s supplies and ammunition had to be extracted from the mud with ropes. The pace of the march slowed to about one mile a day.

On the other side of the river Lee fortified every crossing point and Confederate troops added to the discomfit with their mocking shouts and offers of “help” to build a bridge to cross the river infuriated Burnside. Signs prepared by the Confederates saying “Richmond this way” provided further insult to the efforts of the Union troops.

When Burnside finally reached a suitable crossing, he determined he would launch another Fredericksburg-type crossing but his generals stopped him. With the morale of his men at a low ebb, it was the end of the line for Burnside, at least at this time. Under pressure from the divisional commanders, Lincoln removed Burnside from command of the Union army.

In Burnside’s place, Lincoln appointed “Fighting Joe” Hooker, who rejuvenated the morale of the Union Army, but was to lead them to the next Union disaster at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863

But that’s another story!

- Source: *The Guinness Book of Military Blunders*

Famous Last Words...

“In my latest writing and utterance, I here repeat my unmitigated hatred to... the vile Yankee race.”

- Edmund Ruffin, June 17, 1865,
prior to his committing suicide

“This is a rich man’s war, but the poor man has to do the fighting”

- Confederate soldier, John W Reece,
North Carolina, 1863

which Paul is the President, to aid the poor and needy in the area.

Answers to the 'Einstein Factor' Questions:

The correct answers to the Civil War questions asked in Episode 3 of the Einstein Factor quiz are as follows:

Question 1: Port Hudson.

Question 2: West Virginia.

Question 3: David Glasgow Farragut.

Question 4: Memphis & Charleston.

Question 5: Thomas Jonathan.

Question 6: CSS Alabama.

Question 7: Fugitive Slave Acts.

Question 8: John C Breckinridge.

Question 9: Chattanooga.

Question 10: Battle of Stones River.

Question 11: 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

Bonus Question: False (Approx. 360,000 Union, 260,000 Confederate).

Quotes from the End of the War...

"I restore to its proper place this flag which floated here during peace, before the first act of this cruel rebellion. I thank God I have lived to see this day and to be here to perform this, perhaps the last act of my life, of duty to my country"

- Major General Robert Anderson, Fort Sumter, April 14, 1865

"General, unless he offers us honourable terms, come back and let us fight it out!"

- Confederate General James Longstreet to Lee regarding Grant, April 9, 1865

"Then there is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths... How easy I could be rid of this! All I have to do is ride along the line and all would be over. But it is our duty to live."

- Confederate General Robert E Lee, Palm Sunday morning, April 9, 1865

"Men, we have fought through the war together; I have done my best for you; my heart is too full to say more... goodbye."

- Robert E Lee, April 9, 1865

"The war is over. The rebels are our countrymen again"

- General Ulysses S Grant, April 9, 1865

"I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought for so long and valiantly and had suffered so much for a cause, though the cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought."

- Ulysses S Grant reflecting on Lee's surrender at Appomattox

"If one army drank the joy of victory and the other the bitter draught of defeat, it was a joy moderated by the recollection of the cost at which it had been purchased, and a defeat mollified by the consciousness of many triumphs. If the victors could recall a Malvern Hill, an Antietam, a Gettysburg, a Five Forks, the vanquished could recall a Manassas, a Fredericksburg, a Chancellorsville, a Cold Harbor. How terrible had been the struggle!"

Classified Advertisement

In addition to the books offered for sale recently Paul Kensey has now on offer copies of the following magazines: -

Civil War – The Original Official Magazine of the Civil War Society - 22 Copies

North & South - The Official Magazine of the Civil War Society - 30 Copies

Confederate Veteran - 5 Copies

Variety of magazines – 10 Copies

The magazines are of good quality and provide excellent reading. Paul will have the magazines available for sale at the April 11 meeting.

The cost will be 50 cents per copy or \$4 for 10. The proceeds of the sale will go to the St Vincent De Paul Society Beverly Hills Conference, of

- New York Times Correspondent, William Swinton