

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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Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message to Members –

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I can report that our last meeting in July was the best we have had in living memory! No only was the attendance the best we have had for several years with over 20 members and guests present, but the two presentations by David Smith, (a.k.a Father Dave) and historian and teacher extraordinaire, Bruce Dennett, were characterised by their passion and logic. It was a real privilege to hear these presenters discuss their views of Abraham Lincoln, Father Dave from a Confederate perspective and Bruce offering incisive comment on what he considered to be errors or weaknesses in Father Dave's argument. I would like to thank both David and Bruce for their efforts on the night in providing each of us present with a most scintillating experience and, I hope, something that will provide us with the incentive to continue our meetings in the future with this refreshing approach to Civil War scholarship!

As you see from the adjoining column, our next meeting in September offers not only something "different", but provides a "double-barrelled" set of presentations using in each case multi-media support for the presentations. I do hope that members will set aside this Monday night in September to join us as we seek to revitalize our meeting format.

Some of the members of the Chapter have had the opportunity recently to hear some distinguished historians at lectures arranged by the University of Sydney's United States Studies Centre. These lectures which have been held at the Seymour Centre and the State Library, have provided some interesting insights to Civil War scholarship and may well be something that we consider should be incorporated into our regular program of meetings. I would appreciate members' views on such a proposal, particularly from members that have attended these lectures.

I look forward to seeing you at our September meeting at the Roseville RSL Club.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

The next regular meeting for 2009 for the NSW Chapter of the ACWRTA will be held at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville** will be held on **Monday, September 28**. As is our custom, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start at 7:15pm.

The meeting will seek to build on the success of our last meeting in July when we had our largest attendance for the past two years with over 20 members and guests being present. This meeting will be a "double-header" with the two presentations designed specifically to provide for the wide range of interests of our members. The first presentation is titled:

The Historical Pedant's Guide to the Movie 'Gettysburg'

This presentation will be given by **John Cook** and will be supported by by extracts of the movie via DVD. Essentially this presentation will critically examine the film distributor's claim that this movie has been "rigorously authenticated down to the boots".

The second presentation will be given by **Paul Kensey** who will speak on the topic:

'Taps' – The Story behind the Bugle Call

This presentation will focus on the efforts of General Daniel Butterfield who is credited for devising this bugle call and will be supported by taped music of various military calls. Paul's military background as well as his extensive knowledge of Civil War history will provide members with a rare insight into the origin, development and current use of 'Taps' and other bugle calls used today.

Whilst it is hard to give the guarantee that these presentations will match those from our July meeting, you can be assured that our speakers will be in there trying. Printed papers for both these presentations will be available to members at the conclusion of the meeting.

It Happened in August

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

August 6, 1811 – Judah Philip Benjamin, Attorney General and Secretary of State of the Confederacy is born in St Thomas, British West Indies;

August 27, 1811 – Hannibal Hamlin, US Vice-President under Lincoln is born in Paris Hill Maine;

August 31, 1822 – Fitz-John Porter (USA) is born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire;

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

August 1, 1864 – Philip Sheridan is named Commander of the Army of the Shenandoah and charged with ridding the valley of Confederates especially Jubal Early

August 17, 1862 – JEB Stuart is assigned command of all cavalry of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia;

August 20, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan assumes command of the newly organised Department and Army of the Potomac.

WANTON KILLING AND DESTRUCTION

August 7, 1861 – The village of Hampton, Va, near Fort Monroe, is burned by Confederate forces;

August 13, 1831 – Nat Turner slave insurrection begins in Southampton County, Va, with 55 whites and about 100 blacks killed;

August 21, 1863 – Confederate guerrillas under command of Quantrill sack Lawrence, Kansas, killing about 150 men and boys and destroying over \$1.5 million in property;

August 25, 1863 – Following Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, Federals force some 20,000 people in Missouri from their homes which are then burned;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

August 5, 1864 – Union forces under Admiral David Farragut defeat Confederates at the Battle of Mobile Bay;

August 9, 1862 – The Federal Army of Virginia under John Pope clashes with Stonewall Jackson's corps at the Battle of Cedar Mountain;

August 10, 1861 – Confederate troops are victorious at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, the major battle of the Civil War in Missouri;

August 11, 1862 – In a daring raid, Confederate guerrillas capture Independence, Mo.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

August 15, 1864 – Federals capture the English-built Confederate cruiser *Georgia* off Lisbon, Portugal;

August 18, 1864 – The Battle of the Weldon Railroad in Virginia, begins;

August 22, 1862 - In a raid on Catlett's Station, Virginia, JEB Stuart captures Union General Pope's baggage train, including Pope's papers;

August 26 – 30, 1862 – The Second Bull Run (or Manassas) Campaign ending in a Confederate victory;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

August 2, 1861 – Federal Congress passes the first national income tax measure calling for 3% of income over \$800:

August 4, 1861 – a meeting is held in New York to combat intemperance in the Federal army;

August 8, 1863 – In the wake of the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, Lee offers to resign as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. Davis rejects the offer;

August 14, 1861 – Major General John C Fremont declares martial law in St Louis city and county;

August 19, 1861 - Confederate Congress agrees to an alliance with Missouri resulting in Missouri having two state governments, Federal and Confederate;

August 29, 1863 - The Confederate *H L Hunley* sinks in Charleston Harbour, the five-man crew of the submarine are lost.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS ...

Governor Harris: *"General, are you wounded?"*
General Johnston: *"Yes, and I fear seriously"*

The last words of Albert Sidney Johnston who bled to death after being hit in the leg by a stray Minie ball during the Battle of Shiloh. A simple tourniquet would have saved his life

"Well if we are to die, let us die like men"

The last reported words of Patrick Cleburne, Franklin 1864

"I shall come out of this fight a live major general or a dead brigadier general"

Brigadier General Albert Perrin, killed in action at the Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864.

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 secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

What Happened in September?

Hatches and Dispatches

September 4, 1864 – The Confederate raider and cavalry commander, John Hunt Morgan is shot and killed in a Federal raid on Greenville, Tennessee;

September 6, 1819 – William S Rosecrans (USA) is born in Delaware County, Ohio;

September 10, 1836 – Joseph (Fighting Joe) Wheeler (CSA) is born in Augusta, Georgia;

September 12, 1818 – Richard J Gatling, inventor of the first machine gun (Gatling Gun) used in the Civil War, is born in Hertford County, NC;

September 27, 1809 – Raphael Semmes, the Confederate naval commander responsible for the destruction or capture of 64 Union ships, is born in Charles County, Maryland;

September 29, 1862 – Federal Brigadier General Jefferson Davis shoots and mortally wounds Brig. Gen. William (Bull) Nelson during a quarrel in a hotel in Louisville.

Command Changes

September 28, 1863 – Federal Generals, Alexander McCook and T L Crittenden are relieved of their commands and ordered to a court of inquiry following the Battle of Chickamauga.

Battles

September 11, 1861 – Lee begins the 5-day Cheat Mountain Campaign (Va) which ends in a Confederate withdrawal;

September 14, 1862 – Union forces push the Confederates back at the Battles of South Mountain and Crampton's Gap, Va;

September 15, 1862 – Confederates capture Harpers Ferry, Va, taking about 12000 prisoners;

September 17, 1862 – The Union strategic victory at the Battle of Antietam halts the Confederate advance into the North;

September 19, 1864 – Federal troops commanded by Sheridan defeat Early's Confederates in the Third Battle of Winchester, Va;

September 19-20, 1863 – Battle of Chickamauga resulting in a Federal retreat to a defensive position in and around Chattanooga, Tennessee;

Other Significant Events

September 1, 1864 – Confederates begin to evacuate Atlanta;

September 2, 1864 – Union forces under General Sherman occupy Atlanta;

September 3 1864 – In Charleston Harbour Confederate and Union forces exchange captive surgeons and chaplains;

September 5, 1863 – Under pressure from the US Government, the British do not deliver two ironclads they had built for the Confederacy;

September 7, 1964 – General Sherman orders civilians to leave Atlanta so that he might more easily feed and supply his army;

September 22, 1862 – President Lincoln issues the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation declaring that all slaves in the rebel states to be free as of January 1, 1863.

A Great Bookstore Found – Part 2

In the last Newsletter (No. 46, June-July 2009) it was reported that there is a great bookstore in Byron Bay with an extensive collection of Civil War titles. The details of this bookstore are:

Icon Books

Shop1/109 Jonson Street, Byron Bay
(opposite Woolworths & cinema)
Telephone: 6680 3455
e-mail: iconbooks@bigpond.com

This report brought an interesting response from John King, one of our Queensland members whose comments are presented in full below:

"I noticed in the latest Newsletter about the Icon Bookstore in Byron Bay. You might inform the membership, at a later date, that the owner of the Byron Bookstore also has an even larger store in Griffith Street, Coolangatta, up the Northern end (main street). I haven't spoken to the owner, Ian, for a few years, but I did compliment him on his Civil War selection. He travels to the U.S. to purchase a container load of books, every now and then, and I know he does bring back an excellent selection. He often has those 'hard to find' Time/Life Civil War series. I completed my set from his Coolangatta store. His books can be expensive at times but they always cover the hard-cover copies with a strong clear plastic covering, for protection. If any of the membership is planning a holiday at the Gold Coast, they might also like to visit the gravesite of Australia longest surviving Civil War Vet. He was 17 months short of his 100th birthday when he passed away. William SEYMOUR is buried at the old Tweed Heads Cemetery in Adelaide St., behind the P.C.Y.C. building. He's at the Southern end, 3 rows up from the street. There's usually a small U.S. flag on the site. The flag is renewed each Memorial Day. The metal plaque was recently attached by me."

It is most heartening to find members are reading our Newsletter!

A Free Book...

Margaret Neil-Smith, one of our long term members, has been cleaning out her Civil War library and has found a book given to her in which she is less than interested. Accordingly she has offered this book as a gift to any of our members who would like to read it.

The book is co-authored by the well known Civil War author and medico, Thomas P Lowry, well known for his book *The Story the Soldiers Wouldn't Tell – Sex In the Civil War*.

The book on offer is *Tarnished Scalpels*, and is the account of the courts martial of 50 Union surgeons. The context of these stories involves the Civil War surgeon having to face the challenge of having to answer to two very different authorities. On the one hand, he was bound to uphold the principles of medical tradition, whilst on the other required to obey the regulations of the army. Not every doctor was able to rise to the challenge of these dual responsibilities and many Civil War surgeons ended up facing official sanctions for their alleged medical and/or procedural failures.

It is too easy today to look back on the medical practices of the Civil War era with the superiority of over 140 years of hindsight. Modern medical knowledge and the associated technologies make the practices of 19th Century medicine appear quite primitive. The notion of a sterile operating theatre was not to come into being until 20 years after the War and the Civil War doctor did not think of bacteria because **no one** thought of bacteria. For the same reasons X-rays and blood transfusions were not ordered nor were patients' blood examined for parasites or to prescribe antibiotics.

Any member interested in acquiring this book should contact John Cook by telephone 9412 3214 or by his e-mail at jcook@bigpond.net.au. The book will be available on a "first-come-first-served" basis.

Book Review – “*Vindicating Lincoln*”

This book review is presented following our last meeting when David Smith's presentation provide a Confederate perspective of Abraham Lincoln and seeks to examine many of the derogatory stories and myths about America's Sixteenth President

Thomas L Krannawitter's book *Vindicating Lincoln*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2008, provides a valuable contribution to the already extensive literature on America's Sixteenth President. The RRP for the book is \$US24:95, although it is available from amazon.com for \$US16:45 plus postage. This book has been ordered from Amazon for a total of \$AU33.01 which included \$12:45 postage.

Although regarded by many as America's greatest President, Lincoln generates as much disagreement and resentment as reverence. We only need to hark back to David Smith's recent presentation to reinforce this assertion!

Book Review cont'd

Yes, he freed the slaves; yes, he preserved the Union; yes, he articulated America's greatest principles; but he also has been accused of being a tyrant, a constitutional usurper, a racist, a hack politician and even a spineless ignoramus!

In this book historian, Thomas Krannawitter argues that Lincoln is nothing less than a messianic figure in American politics and American history. Krannawitter examines Lincoln's teachings with a view to reminding today's Americans of their own obligations and challenges in preserving freedom and to show that Lincoln's fight to in defence of basic humanity is still the fight for today,

It is suggested that *Vindicating Lincoln* is a most necessary corrective to the raft of atrocious, mendacious, and vindictive anti-Lincoln scholarship that has cropped up over the last 25 years. It appears that a perverse alliance has been forged between far right libertarians and neo-Confederates and the far left politically correct and anti-American ideologues. They may not agree on much, but they agree that they have found a villain for all seasons in Abraham Lincoln.

This is the book for you if you have ever been puzzled by the arguments that Lincoln was a "tyrant," a "racist," the "father of big government," or that Lincoln cared nothing about slavery but fought the Civil War only protect the economic interests of the ruling class.

This is also the book for you if what you know of Lincoln is his grand monument in Washington, D.C., or the afterglow of his once great reputation. You may want, therefore, an honest assessment of why generations considered him the greatest American of them all. Every anti-Lincoln myth is carefully stated and understood exactly as its proponents wish to be understood, and then patiently demolished.

This is also perhaps the best book in a generation on the Civil War -- its causes, its justice, its necessity. Krannawitter clearly describes every step in the long path that led to war and elucidates every controversy. He does justice to both sides, knowing full well that doing justice to the arguments of the Confederate side not only serves intellectual honesty, but better illuminates the truthfulness and righteousness of Lincoln's case.

It is suggested that *Vindicating Lincoln* is not only the best book of its kind but, for now the only one of its kind!

Worth A Look!

At a recent lecture in Sydney by eminent American historian, Professor David Blight from Yale University, he referred to a book with the most intriguing title:

“Lies My Teacher Told Me – Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong”

A copy of this book will be available for perusal by members at our next meeting