

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 from the Chairman –

Our meetings this year continue to attract large numbers of members, with over thirty members and their guests being at our September meeting to hear Rebecca Power (supported by her son) give a most interesting account of the exploits of Thomas Meagher and John Mitchel, recounted in Australian author, Paula Astridge's new book, *"Waltzing Dixie"*. A special thanks to Rebecca for her well researched presentation and to Paula for her generous donation of ten autographed copies of her book that were snapped up by our members at the end of the evening.

Whilst talking of books, there is a wide selection of Civil War classics still available at rock bottom prices. A listing of these books is enclosed with this Newsletter and you are encouraged to peruse the list for any that are of interest. I can assure you that you will not find a better selection in any bookshop and certainly individual books will not be sold at a lesser price. If you are interested, please contact me and we will work out a great deal for you.

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Brendan O'Connell, has asked that members who have yet to pay their annual subscription should seek to finalise this as soon as possible. To this end, an invoice is enclosed with this Newsletter for members who needing to pay the current subscription. If this affects you, please give it your early attention.

The speaker scheduled for our next regular meeting on Monday, October 28, is a specialist orthopaedic surgeon and dedicated Civil War medical historian from Hartford, Connecticut. Dr Mick Bedard is visiting Sydney and has sought us out to share with us his knowledge and expertise of medical matters in the Civil War area. Further details of his presentation are outline in the adjoining column of this Newsletter.

Please make a special effort to be at the meeting because I believe it will be something special and will round off a great series of presentations we have had this year.

Our Next Meeting

As noted in the Chairman's Message, our next meeting will be held on **Monday, October 27**, at the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club**, Pacific Highway, Roseville. As is our custom, meeting will commence with a bistro style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start somewhere around 7:15 – 7:30pm.

The speaker for this meeting is Dr Mick Bedard, from Hartford, Connecticut, USA. Dr Bedard's topic for our meeting is:

Civil War Medicine – They Did Their Best

Given Mick Bedard's long and distinguished experience as a medico, specialising as an orthopaedic surgeon and his study as an historian with special interest in Civil War medicine, you can be assured that this night's program will be a really special one.

In addition, we will continue with our popular "Show and Tell" segment, so please bring along something or come prepared to speak briefly on a topic for about 3 minutes.

Please make an effort to come to this meeting, bring a friend and make this meeting a success that builds on what we achieved in our earlier meetings this year.

End-of-Year / Christmas Function

Planning is underway for our end-of-year/Christmas function, which will take a similar form to that in previous years. The scheduled date for this function is **Friday, November 29**, commencing at 7pm. Further details of this function will be given at our regular meeting on October 28. This is another good reason for you to be at the October meeting!

John Cook

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;

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;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

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.

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 *HL 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.

It Happened in November

HATCHES AND DISPATCHES

November 3, 1816 – Jubal Early, (CSA), is born in Franklin County, Virginia;

November 5, 1818 – Soldier-politician, Benjamin Franklin Butler, (USA), is born in Deerfield, NH;

November 9, 1825 – A P (Ambrose Powell) Hill, (CSA), is born in Culpepper, Virginia;

November 13, 1814 – Joseph (Fighting Joe) Hooker is born in Hadley, Mass:

COMMAND CHANGES

November 1, 1861 – Major General George B McClellan succeeds retiring Lieutenant General Winfield Scott as general-in-chief of the Union armies;

November 2, 1861 – Major General John C Frémont is relieved of command of the Union's Western Department;

November 5, 1862 – President Lincoln relieves General McClellan of command of the Army of the Potomac replacing him with Ambrose Burnside;

November 10, 1862 – McClellan takes an emotional, spectacular farewell of the Army of the Potomac;

November 24, 1862 – Confederate General Joseph E Johnston is assigned to the major command in the West comprising six states;

November 30, 1863 – Gathering his defeated army in North-West Georgia, Braxton Bragg learns that his resignation has been accepted by President Davis.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

November 11, 1864 – Federals in Rome, Ga., destroy bridges, foundries and warehouses of use to the enemy and proceed towards Atlanta;

November 16, 1864 – General Sherman and 60,000 Union troops leave a burned out Atlanta and begin their march to the Sea;

November 17, 1863 – The Confederate siege of Knoxville, Tennessee, gets underway and the partial siege of Chattanooga continues;

November 29, 1864 – The Federal army under command of John Schofield withdraws under Hood's nose without suffering attack in the "Spring Hill Affair" (in Tennessee).

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

November 6, 1860 – Lincoln is elected President of the United States;

November 8, 1864 – Lincoln is re-elected as United States President with Andrew Johnson of Tennessee as his Vice President;

November 12, 1861 – The Confederate blockade-runner *Fingal*, purchased in England, arrives in Savannah with military supplies;

November 15, 1861 – The YMCA organises the US Christian Commission for support to Federal soldiers;

November 19, 1863 – Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address at the dedication ceremony for the new national cemetery at Gettysburg;

November 25, 1864 – Confederate agents set fire to a number of New York hotels and Barnum's Museum without causing significant damage;

November 26, 1861 – A convention at Wheeling adopts a constitution for a new state to be called West Virginia, created by secession from Virginia;

November 27, 1863 – General John Hunt Morgan and a number of his officers escape from the Ohio State Penitentiary and manage to reach Confederate territory;

November 28, 1861 – Southern Congress officially admits Missouri to the Confederate States of America.

Robbed of Glory, the Aftermath of Gettysburg and its impact on Soldiers and Civilians, Part 1...

An article by Chris Wehner, a long-time Smithsonian member, volunteer, and Civil War Studies contributor.

As the armies melted away from Gettysburg, the horror was just beginning for the town and surrounding community. Nurses and volunteers flowed in from as far as New Jersey even before the fighting had ended. One such volunteer was Cornelia Hancock. Hancock was born in southern New Jersey on February 8, 1840, and was one of five children of a Quaker family. By 1863 her brother and "every male relative" she knew had left for the war, thus Hancock was determined to do her part. That opportunity came during the concluding hours of the Battle of Gettysburg when the call went out for volunteers to help care for the massive amounts of wounded and dead. She left home and arrived with other female volunteers in Philadelphia, and then on to Gettysburg by the close of the battle.

- Cont'd overleaf

When Hancock arrived she observed that virtually every standing structure in Gettysburg had been "converted into a temporary hospital."



Union General Hospital at Gettysburg

Her first stop to help the wounded was a church where she "saw for the first time what war meant." The bodies of the wounded, dying and even the dead were strewn about everywhere and on everything, she exclaimed. Some writhed about in pain, others simply were incapacitated. Hancock noted that it was essentially a "sea of anguish."



Federal dead at Gettysburg

Reid Mitchell's study of the Civil War soldier and his relationship with home titled *The Vacant Chair*, argued that it was a "domestic imagery" that shaped the "ways in which northern soldiers experienced the Civil War." A soldier's relationship with their families, and in particular their mothers, informed their experiences and even their expectations of war. It not only impacted how they interpreted the war, but how they understood the idea of fighting for the Union as the same as fighting for their families. Mitchell's thesis is somewhat controversial according to Eric T. Dean, who wrote an excellent essay, "*The Awful Shock and Rage of Battle*" *Rethinking the Meaning and Consequences of Combat in the Civil War*. In it he argued that social historians such as Mitchell overstate the social construction of things like domesticity and courage as experience shaping (framing) devices for the soldier. Dean frankly states that for the soldiers "on the ground," the carnage was so "shocking, horrific and wrenching" that they were forced into a "kind of alienation from all that is normal, civil and decent."

Both Mitchell and Dean's assessments are well argued, which is why I mention them with regard to Cornelia Hancock. She was a sister and friend to many soldiers and thought it her duty to do her bit. She openly talked about the selfless nature of the soldier, even wounded, who begged her to move on to someone else more injured. How soldiers and officers went out of their way to make sure she was fine and taken care of the men.

After the battle Hancock received a letter from a wounded soldier she tended to and he thanked her, stating "you little know the pleasure a soldier feels in seeing a woman in camp." Indeed, an interesting comment from a soldier after experiencing a terrible battle and its chaotic aftermath. That he thought to thank her for just being, well, a woman is important to note.

Dean is also spot-on as, indeed, the shock and horror of battle did things to men physically and emotionally that few in the 19th century truly understood. Hancock herself is overwhelmed by what she sees, smells, and hears AFTER the battle. This also brings up an interesting point that has been argued by many historians as to the experience of witnessing a battle. Earl J. Hess in his excellent book *The Union Soldier in Battle*, examines the transition of becoming a soldier, identifying a "crossing over" experience after fighting.



Confederate dead during the Battle

I think there is also a gulf that is instantly placed between the soldier in the field and loved ones at home after experiencing battle. The soldier, once crossing over, can never go back to a state of "normalcy" in his relationship with home and family. The simple hard fact is that those back home could never understand or appreciate the horror of a Civil War battle as the soldier did. As noted above, Hancock was obviously shocked by the destruction she found around Gettysburg.

(The concluding part of this article will be presented in the next issue of our Newsletter.)

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, 2075 or e-mail secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

