



The Battle Cry

Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War
Round Table Founded 1961,
<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



**Volume 42, No. 7
July 2002**

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President's Message:

Our president, Paul Ruud, is on vacation in Colorado. The June meeting was conducted by our vice-president, Kit Knight, who also introduced the speaker.

Wearing a name tag that said "George B. McClellan" our own Jim Harper gave an enthusiastic talk on a subject he cheerfully admits to admiring. Of the West Point graduate and Union general, Harper said, "I like him."

Jim Harper teaches U.S. history and also a government class at California State University in Sacramento. In November of 2000, Harper was one of the moderators at the Civil War conference held in Sacramento.

Harper gave us a personal perspective on one of the Union's best assets. He spoke at length on how much McClellan was loved by the men he led. McClellan's name was even bandied about as a possible presidential candidate.

Harper also talked about the saddle McClellan designed. The simpler, less costly saddle was adopted by the War Department in 1859 and was used by both sides throughout the War.

Before McClellan married Ellen Marcy in 1860, she was briefly engaged to Confederate General A.P. Hill. That must have made for some lively discussions in the ranks.

McClellan was notorious for being cautious. Repeatedly, he refused to advance against Rebel forces because he wasn't sure his army was strong enough and well enough supplied. He refused to sacrifice his men. Harper feels McClellan was acting on the advice of a cop named Harry--more than a century before there was a DIRTY HARRY--who said, "A man should realize his limitations." On behalf of the group and our president--Paul will be here for the next meeting at 7 p.m. in Sudwerks on July 31--Kit wishes to thank Jim Harper for an excellent talk on General George B. McClellan.

Kit Knight

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2002

Sudwerk Restaurant, 1375 Exposition Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95815

ATTENDANCE-32

MEMBERS-31

Kit Knight, Vice Pres.

George Foxworth, Treas.

Dudley Albrecht

Claudia Andres

Jim Armstrong

Roy Bishop

Fred Bohmfalk

Carol Breiter

Bernie Buenrostro

Ardith Cnota

Mitch Cnota

Mike Dobbins

Bill Donaldson

Lydia Donaldson

Alan Geiken

Ted Hansen

Jim Harper

Don Hayden

Bob Junell

Ken Kitchen

Russ Knauer

Arthur Knight

Ken Lentz

Mary Lentz

Jim Middleton

Elvin Roach

Keith Roberts

Andrew Sneeringer

Roxanne Spizzirri

Robert Williams

John Zasso

GUESTS-1

Chris Gibbs

1. The meeting was called to order by Vice President Kit Knight who reviewed this day in Civil War history. New members and guests were introduced and welcomed. President Knight read a letter from Gibson Ranch for their appreciation of the SCWRT at the Annual Gibson Ranch Civil War re-enactment.
2. Program—Jim Harper, SCWRT member, presented a program “General George McClellan.” Jim spoke on the organizational and political abilities of General McClellan in an entertaining yet scholar way. An active and long question and answer period followed. Thank you Jim for an alternative view of General McClellan.
3. Committee/Activity Reports
 - a. Monthly raffle.
4. Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

George W. Foxworth,
Acting Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance as of July 14, 2002 is \$1,602.77. The June raffle was \$53.

Thanks to members and guests.

George W. Foxworth

SCWRT PROGRAMS

Remainder - 2002

Jul 31: “Maj Gen Jesse L. Reno” by Paul Ruud

Aug 28: “The entire union line ablaze–Gettysburg, day two” by Ray Bisio

Sep 25: “Images of Slavery,” by Dan Defoe

Oct 30: Two parts: (1) Poetry Reading by Kit Knight
(2) Mini - Presentaton – “The East Bank,” by Russell Knauer. The title refers to the Mississippi River at Vicksburg

Dec 4: SCWRT Panel discussing aspects of “the Atlanta Campaign.”

Speakers: Fred Bohmfalk
 Russell Knauer
 Dennis Kohlmann
 Bob Williams

Moderator: Walt Bittle

Reenactors & Skirmisher WEB SITES

Reenactors of the American Civil War <http://www.racw.org/>

Civil War Skirmish Association <http://www.calweb.com/~arline/>

American Civil War Association <http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/acwa/>

National Civil War Association <http://ncwa.org/>

Battle Cry Editor

This publication is a monthly newsletter (except December) of the Sacramento CWRT. Please submit items to me for publication no later than the meeting day of the Board of Directors, either at that meeting, my home address (on first page), or by e-mail. <BattleCryEditor@aol.com> Check the web site <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org/> for past newsletter editions.

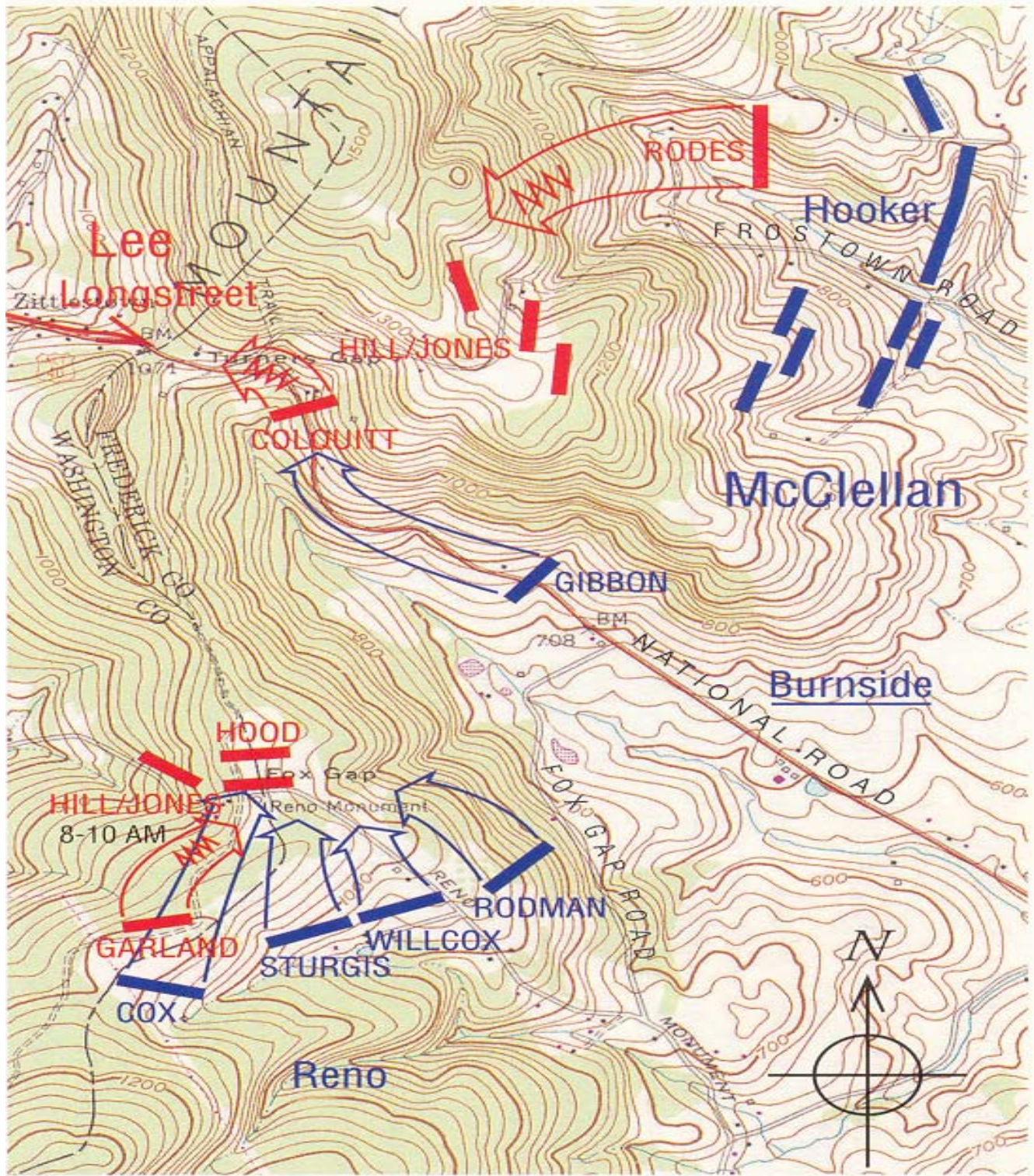
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Major General Jesse Lee Reno
Commanding, 9th Corps
Army of the Potomac

Killed at Fox's Gap
 Battle of South Mountain
 September, 14, 1862

Jesse Reno, born Renault, served in the Ordnance Department, earned two brevets in the Mexican War, and was for a time a professor of mathematics at his alma mater, West Point, from which he graduated in 1846. A captain at the start of the conflict, his later assignments included: brigadier general, USV (November 12, 1861); commanding 2nd Brigade, in the North Carolina Expeditionary Corps (December 1861-January 7, 1862) and in the Department of North Carolina (January 7-April 2, 1862); major general USV (July 18, 1862); commanding 2nd Division, 9th Corps, Army of the Potomac (July 22-September 3, 1862); and commanding the corps (September 3-14, 1862). Reno led the corps in an attack on Fox's Gap in the Antietam Campaign, in an attempt to get between the parts of the rebel force. He died in the attacks in the September 14, 1862 battle of South Mountain. In our program July 31st Paul Ruud will give us the complete story. It should be fascinating.



Combat Strength	Casualties	Scale in Feet
36,000	2,325	0 3000
18,000	2,300	

Fox Gap, SOUTH MOUNTAIN September 14, 1862

NOT TRUE AT ALL, 1919

I'm 90 and not the least bit silly. The fool was right when he wrote that Lincoln as a young lawyer rented a room in our house. Of course Abe knew my sister; he knew me, our dad, the neighbors, and he knew Ann's fiancé. And everyone mourned when Ann died. But, there was no romance—ever—between Abe and my sister. I remember Abe calling steps for a barn dance. "Now swing your pardner, skin the coon and turn him wrong side out!" And he never even danced with Ann. Years passed; he was elected President. Steadily, Lincoln led this country through four of the worst years in history; over 600,000 men died in The Civil War. They wore blue and gray and blood. Lincoln was shot in 1865 And several books were rushed into print defining the leader who said, "I shall do nothing in malice; what I deal with is too vast for malice." Lincoln's old law partner was the fool who insisted Lincoln had been in love with Ann and remained heart broken. The fool told the world Lincoln's mournful face was because of my sister's death. It's not true. It's not true at all.—Kit Knight—

McGill's Comments on McClellan:
"My Two Bits"

I see a program is slated on General George McClellan this month (*June 2002*) Certainly General McClellan was an educated man of appreciable organizational and logistical qualities. He pushed hard to be popular with his troops to maintain an edge. He was truly a resourceful engineer but a dismal failure as a field general. In my opinion, He was the "enemy within" for his contempt (hate is a better word) for President Lincoln and all the policies and practices of his administration. His devious aggressiveness to attain "King" status in this country cost the nation thousands of key young men and prolonged the agony of war for years. The more I look at his life, the more I am convinced of his role as enemy of the country and borderline traitor.

Early Union Generalship of the "War of Southern Aggression" was littered with political buffoons who played politics over effective war-winning strategies and tactics. Certainly leading this bizarre and highly incompetent cluster of mistakes was the "Mac the Unready" and "The Little Corporal of Unsought Fields". He was of small stature, stylish, arrogant, cocky, full of self-amour (sound familiar?), and driven by his politics of "not winning but seeking compromise peace with the Confederacy" philosophy. Engineers are notorious (yours truly excepted) for lack of imagination, dedicated energy to organize and the insatiable hunger for more resources. An engineer he was; a General of a fighting army he wasn't. His vanity and huge overestimation of his enemy (?) blinded by excuses and his

judgement, even from the great distances he kept between himself and the front lines, proved a death wish for the members of the army that had been entrusted to him. His insubordinate labeling of Lincoln as the “Royal Ape” only exceeded his defiance and contempt for Lincoln. Regrettably, the army was blinded by their attraction to the pompous bantam rooster who were misled in his leadership qualities by devious motivational practices, even after the bloodbath in Maryland. The Antietam (Sharpsburg, y’all) campaign including the South Mountain mishandling and the Harper’s Ferry demise with the drunken and crazy Colonel Dixon Miles proved a sad and deadly consequence for the army and far exceeded the mistakes on the Peninsula earlier. McClellan’s (AKA McClellan’s) sophomoric strategies at Antietam Creek, even with the discarded Confederate battle plan handed to him on a silver platter, led to a needless slaughter of young key Americans on both sides. I recently stood on the battlefield at Antietam and pondered the events of September 17th, 1862. Tears would well up in my eyes when I reviewed the needless slaughter resulting from his “no win” strategies and tactics. Even when the piecemeal battle tactics led to the inevitable collapse of the Confederate forces, he failed to complete the battle with deployment of his massive reserves. While he whined over needing more horses and resources, James Ewell Brown Stuart’s cavalry rode completely around McClellan’s army for the second time. Yes, the Confederate Army slipped away from certain total loss that day to rebuild once again and stretch the war into years of death and destruction. For

those of us that subsequently lost ancestors through the senseless death and maiming to the needless continuance of the war, we can hold McClellan and subsequently his friend and replacement Burnside personally responsible. Burnside, at least, openly admitted he was not qualified and tried his best to decline assignment, but was weak enough to cave in and take command under the envious threat of selecting others, such as his nemesis Hooker. Even Sam Grant, with his barbaric but effective tactics and destruction of people to gain his end, pursued the CSA with bulldog determination that generally was successful, except his whoops at Cold Harbor. All of Grant’s 1864 and 1865 losses might be assignable to McClellan, Burnside and Hooker. I guess we should be thankful that McClellan was not elected President after being booted by Lincoln. The Democratic candidate for president in 1864, he was hampered by the party’s plank calling for an end to the war, which was labeled a failure. He himself denounced the plank and was for the rigorous pursuit of victory (go figure). Failed early opportunities to end the war on the Peninsula and in the Maryland Campaign certainly must have been responsible for over sixty percent of the total losses with the war’s continuance. Considering a death total of about 650,000 and another 400,00 dying later from their wounds, McClellan might have saved 600,00 lives had he been up to the task. Too bad.

I had a McClellan saddle since I was a youngster because I was a great fan of the Cavalry. After learning the truth about the events in Antietam, I burned it.

Robert McGill