



Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
P.O. BOX 254702
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702
<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



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2008 Officers:

Paul Ruud, President
(530) 886-8806
ruud@starband.net

Dennis Kohlmann, Vice-President
(916) 726-4432
gkohlma@aol.com

Edie Keister, Secretary
(916) 725-1852

George Foxworth, Treasurer
(916) 362-0178
gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net

Bob Hanley, MAL
(805) 796-5895 cell
acivilwar@aol.com

Bob Williams, MAL
(916) 487-8144
rmwilms@mindspring.com

Don Hayden, IPP
Website Coordinator
(916) 485-1246
djhbooklover@yahoo.com

SCWRT Website
www.sacramentocwrt.com

Kim Knighton, Webmaster
webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com

Jim Middleton, Editor
9120 LaRiviera Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 363-8112
battlecryeditor@sbcglobal.net

Battle Cry deadline is 1:00PM Wed. two weeks before the regular meeting. Items can be given the editor by hand, mail or e-mail.

President's Message:

Happy New Year to each of you! I can't say I have made many resolutions, but I am writing this before Christmas so I still have some time. Winston Churchill once said, "I am easily satisfied with the very best!" I cling to those words of wisdom when I ask how the Sacramento CWRT is doing – I am quite satisfied.

Satisfaction has to be an understatement when describing how Maurice Mitchell must feel about his knowledge of the Lincoln years! I learned an awful lot and I thought I already knew a good bit about our 16th president. We will get Maurice scheduled for part II as openings pop up down the road. Thanks for an extremely well prepared discussion.

I am told that the first organizational meeting for the 2008 re-enactment at Gibson Ranch will occur on January 11th. Lois at Gibson Ranch tells me that the school day where we participate is May 16th. Plan to make yourself available on that magic Friday to escort students around the park.

The start of a new year is always a good time to resolve to play a more positive role in the world around us. Here are a couple of ideas as you think about applying this to your Roundtable.

- (1) Resolve to be at the Hofbrau on the second Wednesday of each month
- (2) Seriously consider becoming an officer – the treasurer, secretary, and Battle Cry editor are positions that hopefully roll over year after year, but that leaves many others to fill. Specifically, President, Vice-President and two members at large. Fresh ideas are always in vogue!
- (3) reserve Friday, May 16th, to be a docent escorting students at the Gibson Ranch Re-enactment.

As you read this Battle Cry, Susan Williams is busy shaping her power point presentation titled the "Iron Horse" for Wednesday night, January 9th. Don't miss the start of another exciting year! See you at the Hofbrau – come early, stay late!

Paul Ruud President

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the December 12, 2007 meeting was \$2,155.83. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$84.00.

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
December 12, 2007
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO

Attendance-46

Attendance-41

Paul Ruud, President
Dennis Kohlmann, Vice President
George Foxworth, Treasurer
Edie Keister, Secretary
Joan Beitzel
George Beitzel
Ken Berna
Roy Bishop
Ardith Cnota
Mithell Cnota

Irene Cole
Evan Cole
Lydia Donaldson
Bill Donaldson
Scott Dmytrow
Brad Friedman
Kyle Glasson
Bob Hanley
Scottie Hayden
Don Hayden

Pam Hubbard
Chuck Hubbard
Lowell Lardie
Victor Le
Grace Long
Cressie Mendes
Phil Mendes
Jim Middleton, Editor
Betty Mitchell
Maurice Mitchell

Roger Mitchell
Horst Penning
Patty Ruud
Richard Sickert
James Taff
Drew VanWinkle
Robert Williams
Silver Williams
Susan Williams
Maxine Wollen
John Zasso

Guests-5

Dudley Albrecht
Chynna Glasson
Rob Mitchell
David Mitchell
Mark Penning

1. Meeting started at 7:00 pm. President Ruud welcomed members and guest. Maurice Mitchell introduced his family members. Welcomed back our Battle Cry editor, Jim Middleton. Officers voted on for the year 2008- Paul Ruud, President, Dennis Kohlmann, Vice-President, George Foxworth, Treasurer and Edie Keister, Secretary. Christmas cake and coffee were served. Thank you George, for getting the cakes.
2. Member Maurice Mitchell presented "Fire in the Rear," on the problems President Lincoln faced with his congress- peace Democrats and radical Republicans. Maybe that's where his "you can please some of the people some of the time..." quote came from?
3. Raffle was held, and meeting adjourned at 8:45.
4. Welcome new members Scott Dmytrow and Roger Mitchell

Edie Keister, Secretary.

I'd like to wish everyone a very happy 2008! Thanks for your support.

Coming Programs 2007

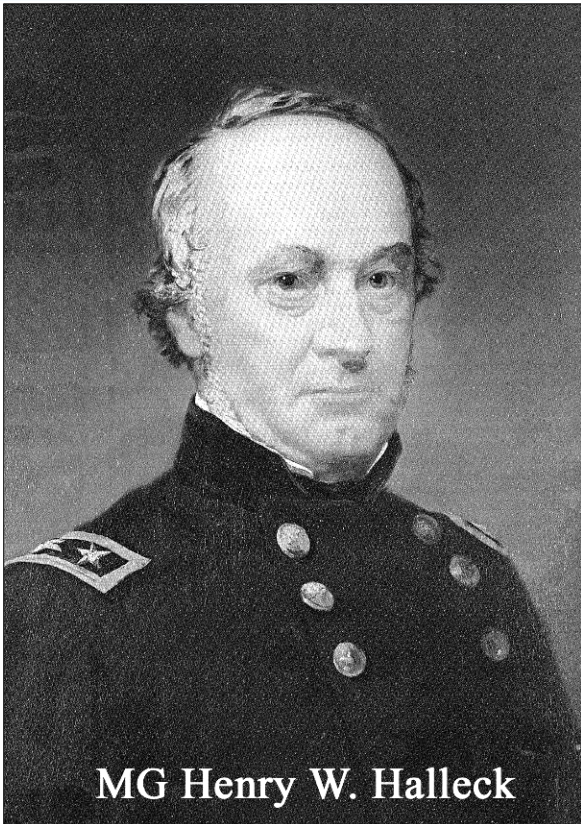
Date	Speaker	Topic
January 9 th	Susan Williams	“Iron Horse”
February 13 th	Sebastian Nelson	“Capt Henry Green, Calif. Infantry”
March 12 th	George Beitzel	“The Rubber Room”
April 9 th	Ray Bisio	“Withdrawal from Gettysburg”

Henry Wager Halleck—Inept General in Chief, Adept Chief of Staff

Henry Wager Halleck was an army engineer, scholar, lawyer; presidents of a mercury mine and a railroad, and a noted expert on military theory. Halleck was an important participant in the admission of [California](#) as a State and became a successful lawyer and land developer. Early in the [Civil War](#), he was the senior commander in the Western Theater and then served for almost two years as general-in-chief of all U.S. armies. He was “kicked downstairs” to be chief of staff of the Army when newly promoted [Lieutenant General U. S. Grant](#), Halleck's former

subordinate in the West, whose battlefield victories did much to advance Halleck's career, replaced him in 1864 as general-in-chief for the remainder of the war, and afterward. Henry Halleck possessed many fine qualities and many bad faults; and some say these just about balanced each other. He was, in fact, one of a number of engineering officers who had provided excellent staff services, but later proved to be disappointments as senior line commanders.

Halleck was born 16 Jan 1815 on a farm in Westernville, NY, third child of 14 of Joseph Halleck, who served as a lieutenant in the [War of 1812](#), and Catherine Wager Halleck. Young Henry detested the thought of an agricultural life and ran away from home at an early age to be raised by an uncle, David Wager of [Utica](#). He attended Hudson Academy and Union College, and the [U. S. Military Academy](#). He was an excellent student of military theory under Professor [Dennis Hart Mahan](#) and was assigned as an instructor while still a cadet. He graduated in 1839, third in his class of thirty-one, and was commissioned a [lieutenant](#) of [engineers](#). After an assignment as an assistant to the Board of Engineers in [Washington](#), and spending a few years improving the defenses of [New York Harbor](#), he wrote a report for the [U. S. Senate](#) on seacoast defenses, *Report on the Means of National Defence*, which pleased General [Winfield Scott](#), who rewarded Halleck with a trip to Europe in 1844 to study European fortifications and the



MG Henry W. Halleck

[French military](#). Returning home, Halleck gave a series of lectures at the [Lowell Institute](#) in Boston that were subsequently published in 1846 as *Elements of Military Art and Science*. His work, one of the first expressions of American military professionalism, was well received by his colleagues and was considered one of the definitive tactical treatises used by officers in the coming Civil War. His scholarly pursuits earned him the nickname “Old Brains”. He became, in effect, the *Jomini-Clausewitz* of the United States military.

During the [Mexican War](#), Halleck was assigned to duty in [California](#). During his long journey on the [USS Lexington](#) around [Cape Horn](#), assigned as aide-de-camp to Commodore [William Shubrick](#), he translated [Jomini's](#) *Vie politique et militaire de Napoleon*, which further enhanced his reputation for scholarship. He spent several months in California building fortifications, and was then first exposed to combat on 11 [Nov](#) 1847, during Shubrick's capture of the port of [Mazatlán](#); Lt. Halleck served as lieutenant governor of the occupied city. He was awarded a [brevet](#) promotion to captain in 1847 for his “gallant and meritorious service” in California and Mexico; and he was appointed captain in the [regular army](#) on 1 July 1853.

Halleck was then transferred to serve under General [Bennet Riley](#), the governor general of the [California Territory](#), and was soon appointed military Secretary of State, a position in which he attended the convention in [Monterey](#) for the writing of the California state constitution and was one of the principal authors of the document to frame the new constitution. At the

convention, he was nominated to be one of two to represent the new state in the [U. S. Senate](#), but was not elected. During his political activities, he found time to join a law firm in [San Francisco](#), Halleck, Peachy, and Billings, which became so successful that he resigned his Army commission in 1854. The following year, he married Elizabeth Hamilton, granddaughter of [Alexander Hamilton](#). Their one child, was Henry Wager Halleck, Jr., born in 1856.

As the Civil War began, Halleck was nominally sympathetic to the South, but he had a strong belief in the value of, and loyalty to, the [Union](#). His reputation as a military scholar and an urgent request from [Winfield Scott](#) raised him in rank to [major general](#) in the regular army, effective 19 Aug 1861, making him the fourth most senior general in the Army (after Scott, [McClellan](#), and [Frémont](#)). He was assigned to command the [Department of the Missouri](#), replacing Frémont in [St. Louis](#) on 9 Nov; and his talent for administration quickly sorted out the chaos of fraud and disorder left by his predecessor. He set to work on the “twin goals of expanding his command and making sure that no blame of corruption fell on the army in the future.”

Halleck established an uncomfortable relationship with the man who would become his most successful subordinate and future commander, then BG [U. S. Grant](#). Grant had just completed the minor, but bloody, [Battle of Belmont](#) and had ambitious plans for amphibious operations on the [Tennessee](#) and [Cumberland](#) Rivers. Halleck, cautious by nature, but also judging that Grant's reputation for booze in the prewar Army made him unreliable,

rejected Grant's plans. However, under pressure from Lincoln to take offensive action, Halleck reconsidered and Grant conducted operations with naval and land forces against Forts [Henry](#) and [Donelson](#) in February 1862, capturing both, along with some 14,000 rebels.

Grant became a national hero, delivering the first significant Union victory of the war. Halleck obtained a promotion for him to major general of volunteers, along with some other generals in his department, and used the victory as an opportunity to request overall command in the Western Theater, which he currently shared with MG [D. C. Buell](#), but which was not granted. He relieved Grant of command after Grant met with Buell in [Nashville](#) without his knowledge, citing rumors of renewed alcoholism, but pressure by Lincoln and the War Department caused him to reverse his decision. As he explained the reinstatement to Grant, Halleck portrayed it as his effort to correct an injustice, not revealing that the injustice had originated with him. Nevertheless, Halleck designated one of Grant's subordinates, BG C. F. Smith to lead a follow-up operation down the Tennessee and personal intervention from Lincoln was again required to restore Grant to full command. When Grant wrote to Halleck suggesting "I must have enemies between you and myself," Halleck replied, "You are mistaken. There is no enemy between you and me."

Halleck's department performed well in early 1862, driving the Confederates from the state of Missouri and advancing into Arkansas. They held all of West Tennessee and half of Middle Tennessee. Grant, as of yet

unaware of the political maneuvering behind his back, regarded Halleck as "one of the greatest men of the age" and MG [William Sherman](#) described him as the "directing genius" of the events that had given the Union cause such a "tremendous lift" in the previous months. This performance can be attributed to Halleck's strategy, administrative skills, and his good management of resources, and to the excellent execution by his subordinates; Grant, MG [Samuel Curtis](#) at [Pea Ridge](#), and MG. [John Pope](#) at [Island Number 10](#). Many historians disagree about Halleck's personal role in providing these victories. Some offer him the credit based on his overall command of the department; others, particularly those viewing his career through a focus on later events, believe that his subordinates were the primary factor. What these future events clearly indicated was that Henry Halleck did his best work while seated behind a desk.

Halleck's command was enlarged to include [Ohio](#) and [Kansas](#), along with Buell's [Army of the Ohio](#), and on 11 [Mar](#) 1862 was renamed the [Department of the Mississippi](#). Grant's [Army of the Tennessee](#) was attacked on 6 [April](#) at the [Battle of Shiloh](#) and managed, with reinforcements from Buell on 7 [April](#), to repulse the Confederate Army under Gen. [A. S. Johnston](#) and [P.G.T. Beauregard](#), but at high cost in casualties. The public outcry at the slaughter of Shiloh caused Halleck to reassign Grant to be his second-in-command, a job with essentially no responsibilities, while Halleck took personal command of his massive army for the first time in the field. He conducted operations against Beauregard's army in [Corinth, MS](#),

called the [Siege of Corinth](#) because Halleck's army, twice the size of Beauregard's, moved so cautiously and stopped daily to erect elaborate field fortifications; taking 16 days to move 24 miles. Beauregard eventually abandoned Corinth without a fight.

Upon his arrival in Washington, D.C., Halleck continued to excel at administrative duties and facilitated the training, equipping, and deployment of thousands of Union soldiers over vast areas. He was unsuccessful, however, as overall commander of the field armies or as a grand strategist. Halleck, more a bureaucrat than a soldier, was able to impose little discipline or direction on his field commanders. Strong personalities such as McClellan, Pope, and [Burnside](#) routinely ignored his advice and instructions. A telling example of his lack of control was during the [Northern Virginia Campaign](#) of 1862, when Halleck was unable to motivate McClellan to reinforce Pope in a timely manner, which contributed to the Union defeat at the [Second Battle of Bull Run](#). It was from this incident that Halleck fell from grace. Abraham Lincoln said that he had given Halleck full power and responsibility as general in chief. "He ran it on that basis till Pope's defeat; but ever since that event he has shrunk from responsibility whenever it was possible." Lincoln later said of Halleck that he was "little better than a first rate clerk". (But Halleck's most severe and unfair critic was navy secretary Gideon Welles, who said of him; "He originates nothing, anticipates nothing, takes no responsibility, plans nothing, suggests nothing, is good for nothing".)

In Halleck's defense, his subordinate commanders in the Eastern Theater, whom he did not select, were reluctant to move against [R. E. Lee](#) and the rebel [Army of Northern Virginia](#). Many of his generals in the West, other than Grant, also lacked aggressiveness. And despite Lincoln's pledge to give the general in chief full control, both he and [Secretary of War Stanton](#) micromanaged many aspects of the military strategy of the nation. Halleck wrote to Sherman, "I am simply a military advisor of the Secretary of War and the President, and must obey and carry out what they decide upon, whether I concur in their decisions or not. As a good soldier I obey the orders of my superiors. If I disagree with them I say so, but when they decide, it is my duty faithfully to carry out their decision."

On 12 Mar 1864, after [Grant](#) was promoted to [lieutenant general](#) and became general in chief, Halleck at his own request was relegated to [chief of staff](#), responsible for the administration of the U.S. armies. Grant and the War Department took special care to let Halleck down gently. Now that there was an aggressive general in the field, Halleck's administrative capabilities complemented Grant nicely and they worked well together. Throughout the arduous [Overland Campaign](#) and [Richmond-Petersburg Campaign](#) of 1864, Halleck saw to it that Grant was properly supplied, equipped, and reinforced on a scale that wore down the Confederates. He agreed with Grant and Sherman on the implementation of [total war](#) toward the Southern economy and endorsed both [Sherman's March to the Sea](#) and MG [Philip Sheridan's](#) destruction in the [Shenandoah Valley](#). Alongside Grant, Sherman, and

Sheridan, Henry Halleck may be regarded as one of the fathers of modern warfare.

After Grant forced Lee's surrender at [Appomattox](#), Halleck was assigned to command the Military Division of the James, headquartered at [Richmond](#). He was a pall-bearer at Lincoln's funeral. He lost his friendship with Sherman when they quarreled over Sherman's initial surrender agreements with Confederate General Joe Johnston. In Aug 1865, he was transferred to the Division of the Pacific in California, essentially in military exile until Mar 1869, when he was assigned to command the [Division of the South](#), headquartered in [Louisville, Kentucky](#).

While stationed in Richmond, Halleck's forces discovered a huge cache of confederate war records, consisting of 81 boxes weighing 10 tons, which the rebel leaders had ostensibly planned to destroy, but failed to do so in their rush to leave town. Recognizing their value to future researchers he had them sent to Washington for safe keeping; and they added immeasurably to the later preparation of the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*.

Henry Halleck died 9 Jan 1872 at his post in Louisville. He is buried in [Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York](#), and is memorialized by a street named for him in San Francisco and a statue in [Golden Gate Park](#). He left no memoirs and apparently destroyed his private correspondence and memoranda. His estate at his death was valued at \$475,000 (over \$8 million in today's dollars). His widow, Elizabeth, married BG [George Cullum](#) in 1875. Cullum had served as Halleck's chief of staff in the

Western Theater and then on his key staff in Washington.

Halleck's position as a soldier is defined by his consistent success as a civil and military administrator, his equally consistent lack of success as an officer at the head of large armies in the field, and by the quality and popularity of his theoretical writings on warfare. His influence, for good or bad on the course of the Civil War was greater than that of any officer on either side save [Grant](#) and [Lee](#), and while his interference with the dispositions of the commanders in the field was often disastrous, his services in organizing and instructing the Union forces were always of the highest value. In this respect, many modern day historians now believe he was an overall asset to the Union war effort, albeit not by a tremendous margin. Some have also said that while Halleck didn't do so much to help win the war, he did a lot to prevent Lincoln from losing it. Heaven help had the Union army ended up with another half-dozen Ben Butler-types, which Halleck prevented from happening.

Bob Williams: 12-21-07

References:

[Ambrose](#), "Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff", 1999;
Anders, "Henry Halleck's War", 1999;
Eichers, "Civil War High Commands", 2001;
Hattaway and Jones, "How the North Won", 1983;
Marszalek, "Commander of All Lincoln's Armies", 2004.

ON GENERAL O. O. HOWARD²²

[p.230]The *Magazine of American History* is to be revived, with General O. O. Howard as editor. General Howard's hardihood in accentuating his connection with American history transcends the limits of human effort and passes into the circumcluding domain of infinite gall. This military Quaker, spirited sheeply and skilled in the tactics of confusion and the strategy of retreat, will hardly try to keep up with his pen the place in American history that he won with his heels. I do not mean to affirm a lack of courage in General Howard; his crayfish charges were due to a lukewarm support on the part of the enemy-whose woeful state of sin caused him the liveliest and most prayerful concern. The piety of the man is touching. When struck by a spent bullet he would knuckle down upon his Marybones and thank the God of Battles for letting him off with all his limbs; when his arm went he made a handsome acknowledgment of the divine goodness in thinking him worthy to keep his life. If he had incurred a bellyful of grapeshot he would have expended his last breath in gratitude for the safety of his hat. Of his patriotism there can be no question: this is a country of religious cant, and he loves it—a land of holy snuffle and he will fight for it as long as it has an enemy out of sight and hearing. He is about to retire, however, being sixty-four years old. If he had been born sixty-four years old it would have been greatly to the advantage of his military reputation outside church circles, and would have saved us two years of war.

²² "Prattle," *San Francisco Examiner*, October 7, 1894. SOLE, 44-45.

I once had the honor to serve as a staff officer under this consummate master of the art of needless defeat, and he made the critical Confederate eye familiar with my back—which is not handsome. I said then that I would get even if spared, and Heaven having spared me for the good work, these remarks are in part performance of that pious vow. This explanation seems proper in order that they may be taken with whatever allowances the reader may think right and just in a matter not devoid of personal feeling. I should be sorry indeed to discredit any of my private animosities by disguising them as history. [p, 231]

Down in Georgia is a little forest where the blood of six hundred of my fifteen hundred battle mates utters a mute demand for recognition and place in this revenge. It took them only twenty minutes to fall, but it has taken General Howard thirty years to ignore their hopeless heroism, and he has not finished. He was probably the only officer present who expected a different result; but as humble testimony to the sustaining power of religion, I am bound to confess that he has borne his disappointment with a more unflinching cheerfulness than the rest of us have felt in the memory of our fulfilled expectations. *Vale*, General Howard!—may you live forever! And may every unctuous smile of your life cover a warm and comfortable consciousness of your soldierly generosity in enriching American history with *one line* about the affair at Pickett's Mill. ²³

²³ Bierce, Ambrose. "Phantoms of a Blood-Stained period: The Complete Civil War Writings of Ambrose Bierce" Edited by Russell Duncan & David J. Klooster. Amherst, MA University of Massachusetts Press [Chapter Four p. 230-231].