

Battle Cry



Vol. 43 No. 2 February 2003 Newsletter of Sacramento Civil War Round Table

Presidents Message:

I was very pleased with our first meeting of the New Year. One always wonders how things will work out. The Sizzler is going to be a fine meeting place and the food is good and reasonably priced.

I was happy to see we set a record for the raffle. You know, our raffle is a real good fund raiser and John Zasso does a super job. If any of you have anything you would like to donate to the raffle please do so.

Another thing I was happy about was the number of people from our group who volunteered to be presenters. I think we will have some very interesting home grown presentations.

This month we will have a discussion on what should be presented by the park service at all the civil war battle fields. It should be very interesting.

I attended the preview of the new movie Gods and Generals. It is very disappointing how some people will go to such efforts and then include such errors as General Lee

being given command of the Army of Virginia by the Virginia Congress. What about General Joseph Johnston? I was surprised to see so many people in costume. I often wonder how interested in history they are.

Here is a quote from the Biography of John Bell hood by Richard M. McMurry:

It was Hood's friend Mrs. Chestnut who noted a comment that well summarized Hood's life. Recording a remark allegedly made by Union General Winfield Scott, Mrs. Chestnut wrote: "General Scott on Southern soldiers. He says that we have élan, courage, woodcraft, consummate horsemanship, endurance of pain equal to Indians, but that we will not submit to discipline. We will not take care of things or husband our resources. Where we are, there is waste and destruction. If it could be done by one wild desperate dash, we would do it"

MINUTES

SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Sizzler Restaurant, 2030 Fulton Avenue, Sacramento

Attendance – 46

Members – 45

Dennis Kohlmann, Pres.	Fred Bohmfalk	Robert Junell	Elvin Roach
Kit Knight, Vice Pres.	Bernie Buenrostro	Ken Kitchen	Keith Roberts
George Foxworth, Treas.	Ardith Cnota	Russ Knauer	Paul Ruud
Walt Bittle, Sec.	Mitch Cnota	Arthur Knight	Natalie Schafer
Dudley Albrecht	Michael Dobbins	Ken Lentz	Rudy Schafer
Claudia Andres	Bill Donaldson	Mary Lou Lentz	Brad Schall
Jim Armstrong	Lydia Donaldson	Earl Martin	Bob Williams
Mark Aulman	Alan Geiken	Virginia Martin	Susan Williams
Mary Aulman	Ted Hansen	Jim Middleton	Maxine Wollen
George Beitzel	Don Hayden	Bev Passerello	Mike Wollen
Joan Beitzel	Mary James	John Passerello	John Zasso
Roy Bishop			

Guests – 1

Larry Whitlock

1. The meeting was called to order by President Kohlmann, who reviewed this day in history. Guests and new members were introduced and welcomed. The minutes of December 4 were approved as printed. The treasurer submitted a year-end fiscal statement for the year 2002.

2. The first order of business was the presentation of an engraved gift to the outgoing President Paul Ruud, who served faithfully and well as President. Our thanks go out to Paul for his dedication and leadership during his two years in office. We do hope he will continue to serve in some capacity.

3. Program – Dennis Kohlmann presented a program about Lincoln's Vice President, Hannibal Hamlin. Republican Hamlin of Maine almost disappeared from the history books when he was replaced on the 1864 ticket by Democrat Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. Dennis did an excellent job of reviewing the life of Hamlin, giving us a much clearer picture of the often-overlooked man and his times. Had Hamlin been re-elected to the Senate in time for Johnson's impeachment trial, he probably would have voted to convict. History hangs on just such threads.

4. Committee/Activity Reports

- Dudley Albrecht reminded members about upcoming Civil War-related films *Cold Mountain* and *Gods and Generals*.
- President Kohlmann announced that next month's meeting will feature a discussion about the new, and little understood, rules for interpretation at National Military Parks. Don Hayden and Jim Harper will each present a point of view regarding the controversy.
- Fred Bohmfalk asked if there was sufficient interest to put together a group tour of the Civil War facilities on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. The members responded positively.
- Walt Bittle added eight free passes (donated by Warner Brothers) to the raffle.

5. Adjournment

Following a record-setting (thanks to Warner Brothers) raffle, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Walt Bittle

Secretary

Treasurer's report

The cash balance after the meeting of January 29 was \$1713.25. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$108.

George Foxworth, Treasurer

February Program

Jim Harper and Don Hayden will talk pro and con about slavery and the interpretations presented by the National Park Service.

Meeting Place

We will meet at the Sizzler 2030 Fulton Ave. Sacramento, CA just south of the southeast corner of Fulton and Cottage Way. Dinner and conversation at 6:00PM and the meeting starts at 7:00PM.

SCWRT Board Meeting

January 15, 2003 – 11:30 AM
Carrow's Restaurant – 28th and J,
Sacramento

Attendance:

Bob Williams	Paul Ruud
Jim Middleton	Kit Knight
Dennis Kohlmann	Arthur Knight
Bernardo Buenrostro	Walt Bittle
George Foxworth	

1. Dennis Kohlmann welcomed the members to his first Board Meeting as President, and listed some goals for the coming year. Dennis hopes to increase the membership, in part by providing quality programs. In fact, Dennis is presenting the first program of the year on January 29 – about Hannibal Hamlin.

2. There was further discussion about program possibilities – month by month. Jim Harper and Don Hayden will be discussing the new rules for interpretation at National Park sites in February. Paul Ruud will contact Dr. Brian Clague of Fresno to do a presentation on CW medicine in March.

George Foxworth suggested that we ask Ray Bizio to do "Gettysburg, Day 3". Members were encouraged to put together a program.

3. There was discussion of PR activities, particularly the problem of getting our correct meeting announcements in the *Bee*, *Neighbors*, and other publications.

4. Kit Knight suggested that we might have a book review at each meeting, or even have one meeting with nothing but book reviews. Jim Middleton solicited any and all book reviews for the Battle Cry.

5. There was also discussion about our participation at the State Fair, at Gibson Ranch, and at other round tables. The Gibson Ranch activity will be May 2, 3, and 4. It is assumed we will provide guides for the Friday student activities, and set up a booth for the weekend. Dennis and other board members will attend the organizational meeting at Gibson Ranch.

6. Bernie Buenrostro volunteered to draft a brochure to announce our existence to potential members. Paul Ruud volunteered to update the membership form.

7. Dennis announced that he will initiate the phone tree later in the month to make sure all members know about our change of meeting location. Board members will use the roster dated October 30, 2002.

Walt Bittle
Secretary



Fort Pulaski aerial view

The Siege and Fall of Fort Pulaski

Fort Pulaski, located near the mouth of the Savannah River, was one of the 29 masonry forts in the so-called “Third System” of seacoast defense works that were built during the 1820 to 1860 period. These forts extended from Maine to California. Pulaski’s nearest neighbor is the more famous Fort Sumter, Charleston: and the one closest to us is Fort Point, San Francisco. When constructed these impressive granite and brick structures were considered to be impregnable, but that thinking did not realize the advent of rifled artillery.

Two weeks before Georgia seceded, the State Militia seized Fort Pulaski from the small federal caretaker force then occupying the fort. Under Confederate control about 50 smooth bore artillery pieces were installed, although the fort had a design capacity for 150 guns in its single tier casemates and barbette mounts. The fort was held by the rebel forces from early January 1861 until April 11, 1862. During the latter portion of this period, eleven artillery batteries, containing 36 pieces, were built by the Federals on Tybee Island; a distance of one to two miles east south east of Cockspur Island, the location of Fort Pulaski.

Construction of the federal gun emplacements was under the supervision of Corps of Engineers Captain Quincy Gillmore, assisted by Lieutenants John H. Wilson, Horace Porter, and Patrick O’Rorke. Federal

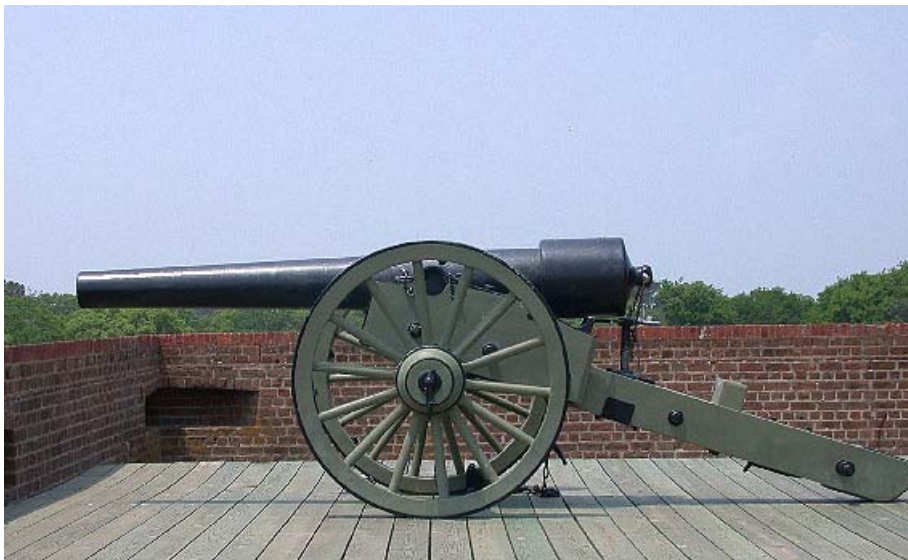
Department Commanders during the field artillery placement, and during the siege operations were BG Thomas Sherman and MG David Hunter, respectively. Of the 36 artillery pieces; nineteen were 10 and 13 inch siege mortars, seven were 8 and 10 inch Columbiad smooth bores, and ten were Parrott and James Rifles (five each of varying sizes; 30 pdr. Parrotts and 48, 64, and 84 pdr. James Rifles).

The siege began the morning of April 10, after the fort's refusal to surrender. The mortars and smooth bores did extensive superficial damage, including the dismounting of several fort guns. However, it was the rifled guns that effectively breached the 7½ foot thick southeast salient wall (nearest to camera in the aerial picture; the other photo shows a close-up of the wall). The wall opening created a clear shot path diagonally across the parade ground to the fort's magazines in the northwest salient adjacent to the gorge wall. This latter situation was all that was needed to encourage fort commander Colonel Charles Olmstead to surrender his 380-man force to Captain Gillmore the next day.

The battle for Fort Pulaski was the first action of rifled guns against masonry forts. The intended initial result was, of course, the closing of the Port of Savannah to blockade runners for the remainder of the Rebellion. The long-term implication was, however, that the Nation's seacoast defense system had become obsolete, and would require significant and costly modifications. In effect, this one event spelled an end to the style of fortification represented by the "Third System" then only recently completed.

Although badly damaged during the Rebellion and generally abandoned thereafter, Fort Pulaski has gradually been restored, largely during the 1930's by PWA funds and CCC labor. It became a National Historical Monument in 1924, and is one of the many great historical (and fun!) sites to visit in the Savannah, Georgia area.

Bob Williams: 2-9-03



Book Review

by Walt Bittle

The Longest Night – A Military History of the Civil War by David J. Eicher

[855 pages (plus appendices) –
Copyright 2001 – Paperback \$22]

I was more than skeptical when I read Jeffry D. Wert's blurb: *"It should stand for a long time as the best and most complete single-volume military history of the Civil War. A splendid achievement."*

In his foreword, James M. McPherson followed that with this comment: *"Here the reader will find engrossing accounts of all the battles, large and small, linked together in a manner so lucid and logical that the cause-effect relationships among events taking place in several theaters of war in chronological succession – sometimes even simultaneously – emerge with new clarity."*

It took me a while to wade through 855 pages of details, but I must admit I agree wholeheartedly with both Wert and McPherson. And I can add little of substance to their comments, except to compliment the author for debunking a variety of myths (like the alleged shoes at Gettysburg). This well-researched book is an excellent source – for the novice as well as the expert. Add it to your library.

Last Widow of Union Veteran Dies

L.A. Times 1/20/03 From AP
BLAINE, Tenn. -- Gertrude Janeway, the last widow of a Union veteran from the Civil War, has died in the three-room log cabin where she lived most of her life. She was 93.

Bedridden for years, she died Friday, more than six decades after the passing of the man she called the love of her life, John Janeway, who married her when he was 81 and she was barely 18. "She was a special person," said the Rev. Leonard Goins, who officiated at her funeral Sunday. "Gertie, as she was called, had a vision beyond that [cabin] that kept her going. She never had any wavering or doubt in her salvation."

She was to be buried today near her husband's slender military tombstone at tiny New Corinth Church cemetery. An honorary member of the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Janeway was the last recognized Union widow. She received a \$70 check each month from the Veterans Administration.

Still alive is Confederate widow Alberta Martin, 95, of Elba, Ala.

Janeway once recalled getting married in the middle of a dirt road in 1927 with family and friends gathered around. Her husband bought her the cabin in 1932 and it was there that he died in 1937, at 91. "After he died, why it just seemed like a part of me went down under the ground with him."

Lincoln in Richmond

Friday, January 10, 2003; Page A20

AND THE CIVIL WAR goes on. In Richmond, various sons and daughters of the lost cause are raising a fuss over a statue of Abraham Lincoln that will commemorate his visit to the conquered Confederate capital in the final days of the war. They are abetted by Del. Richard H. Black of Loudoun County, who is not even sure there should be a statue of the 16th president anywhere in Virginia. The major objection is that Lincoln came to gloat over Richmond's fall. "He sat at Jefferson Davis's desk and propped his feet up on the desk," said one angry son of the Confederacy. Heavens, bring the smelling salts. Mr. Lincoln is not remembered as a gloating man, but maybe it could be regarded as insensitive of him to have descended as he did into the midst of a sullen and defeated population. Except that not *everybody* was all that sullen and defeated. Jay Winik, in his book "April 1865," describes the scene as Mr. Lincoln walked from his boat: "Out came a sound. 'Glory to God!' It was a black man working by the dock. Then again: 'Glory to God! Glory! Glory! Glory!' Leaving their squalid houses and their tarpaper shacks, an impenetrable cordon of newly freed blacks followed Lincoln down the rubble-strewn streets, starting with a handful and swelling into a thousand. 'Bless the Lord!' they shouted. . . . 'Glory hallelujah.' "

Surely many of those celebrators have descendants who live in Richmond to this day but who haven't been much consulted over the past 138 years on the themes of the city's many monuments. As Mr. Black's colleague Del. Viola O. Baskerville of Richmond observes, perhaps it's time some people learned "the complete story of the Civil War."

PEGGY LINCOLN, 1890 ALMOST GOOD ENOUGH

My brother just died.
World-wide newspapers
are grieving about the end
of the Lincolns. The President
had four sons and three died
young. Eddie was only
four; My grandfather was still
a lawyer in Illinois then.
Willie died in the White House
during the Civil War. He
was 12. A third son died
at 18. The only one left
became my father, Robert.
He'd been named for his
Kentucky grandfather.
My dad had uncles and cousins
who fought and died
for the South. That War
was personal. Many mothers
watched one son march
north while another went
south and they mourned
both deaths. And now
my dad's only son,
who'd been given
the President's name,
is dead. Everyone called
my brother Jack. Our dad
told Jack he wasn't to use
his given name until he
"proved worthy" At 16
Jack was showing grand
potential. He was studying
in France, preparing
to enter Harvard. Blood
poisoning. Jack died
and everyone says
the great Lincoln line
died, too. No one cares
that my sister and I
will have children
and that's almost as good.

Kit Knight

Battle Cry Editor

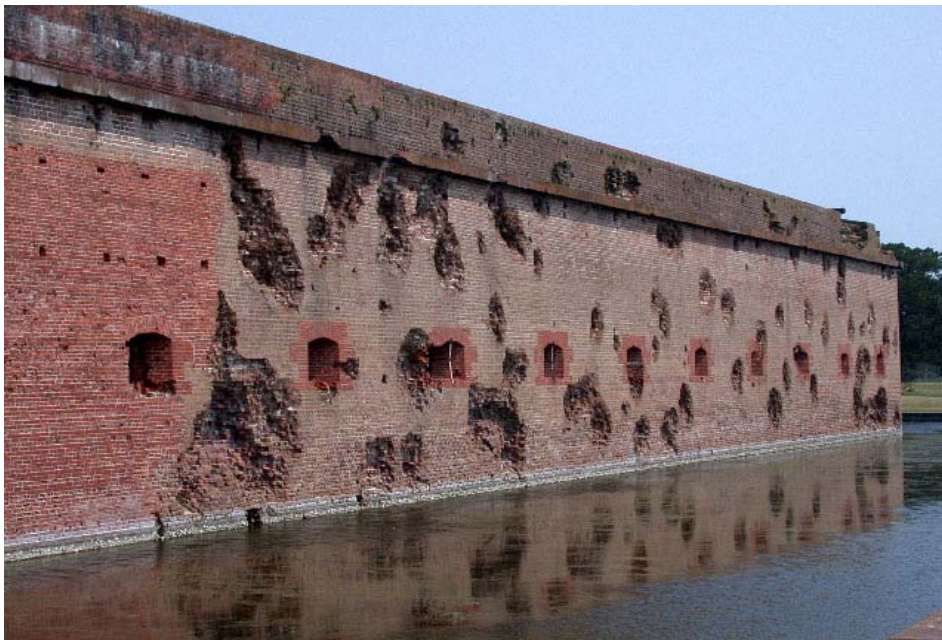
The Battle Cry is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Please submit items to me for publication no later than the meeting day of the Board of Directors, (next meeting is February 12, 2003) either at that meeting (Carrows at 29th & J at 11:30am to 1:00pm), by U.S. mail or by e-mail. BattleCryEditor@aol.com

The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table P.O. Box 254702 Sacramento, CA 95865-4702.

<http://www.sacramentocwrt.org> is the web site address. Check it for past newsletter editions and information about the group.

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Fort Pulaski wall detail