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# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
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## President's Message

I was very impressed with Bernie Quinn's presentation on Berdan's sharpshooters, especially his parts on recruiting and their work at Gettysburg. They had good rifles but used black powder. This meant slower muzzle velocities. A man could be good at 300 - 400 yards, but exact distance was critical and he almost lobbed his shot in. I found it very interesting what it took to join. Unfortunately, this recruiting stopped once the original two regiments were filled. Then attrition took over and the sharpshooters were formed into one regiment and finally dispersed throughout the Army.

At our next meeting, I will have an example of a ladies' club shirt. I should hear from Ann Colvin at NORCAL Logos any day now. I believe it will look very nice and show club spirit.

At the next meeting, we will have a speaker from the past. I understand he (Dennis Kohlmann) is quite good. His topic has changed to "Birth of a Cavalry." For the first 2 years in the East, Jeb Stewart's cavalry was superior to that of the Army of The Potomac. One of the first things General Hooker did when he took command in January 1863 was to create a Cavalry Corps. The talk will be about how this new Corps developed.

Often when you read about armies in camp, you read about parades. Grand reviews and unit parades accompanied by military bands may seem strange by modern standards, but Civil War armies drew directly from Napoleonic models in which pageantry, symbolism, and ceremony were interwoven with the esprit and the brutal and bloody business of battle. Napoleon's armies were the gold standard of Nineteenth Century warfare and the beau ideal of many Civil War soldiers, especially those of the general and colonel persuasion.

**Dennis Kohlmann, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, February 14, 2018**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDANCE – 25**

**MEMBERS – 22:** Dennis Kohlmann, President; Donald Hayden, Vice President; Barbara Leone, Secretary; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Roy Bishop, Mark Carlson, Arnd Gartner, Wayne Henley, Chris Highsmith, Jane Jackson, James Juanitas, Arnold Kunst, Michelle & Joseph Matalone, Bernie Quinn, John Rice, Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, Richard Sickert (MAL); Roxanne Spizzirri, Dan & Faye Wolfe.

**GUESTS – 3:** Esther Boeck, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri.

1. Dennis Kohlmann called the meeting to order and Don Hayden led the Pledge. Nicholas Scivoletto conducted the raffle. Dennis will bring an example of the lady's Club polo shirt to the next meeting.
2. Member Bernie Quinn began his talk on sharpshooters with a 1937 recording of the "rebel yell." With modern technology, the 3 cadence bark was multiplied 100 times to approximate what it would sound like in battle.
3. Hiram Berdan, a famous marksman, had the idea to form the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of United States Sharpshooters. So many applied a 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was added. Their major function was that of skirmisher. A defensive skirmisher was responsible for preventing the enemy from discovering the Army's main body. An offensive skirmisher's first duty was to find the enemy's main body, perhaps kill a few, and then report to the general what the rebels were doing. Their secondary duty was to be a sniper or counter sniper. When the enemy's sharpshooters were killing Union soldiers the Union shooters were employed. They also eliminated artillery gunners. A skirmish line was shooters separated by 5 yards (open order) making it harder for one fighter to be hit.
4. The Confederates called them "snakes in the grass," "green demons," and "green coats" because of the original color of the uniform. It changed over time and by Gettysburg, the coat was blue. There were 1,000 men in each regiment with 10 - 11 companies. A sharpshooter was required to have his own weapon and hit a 10-inch target at 200 yards 10 consecutive times. They received higher pay.
5. The Union used the Springfield rifle and the Confederates used the Enfield although both sides used both. They were muzzle loaders and shot about 1.5 times per minute. The Sharps rifle was a single bullet breach loader that was fast to load and could shoot 9 times a minute. The Spencer, a repeater, could fire 17 times a minute. The Whitworth was the "super cyber" choice of the Rebels because it could shoot to 2,000 yards effectively.
6. The Union troops did not know where the Rebels were on the second day of Gettysburg, July 2 1863. One hundred 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment shooters went out in open order and came upon 20,000 Rebels. With support from 200 Maine men, they fought for 20 minutes and won. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, 169 men, covered Round Top on the left flank facing Hood's Division. The strategy was to rapidly eliminate the officers and the flag bearer; it was effective in breaking the enemy. Years later, two Confederate officers gave credit to the sharpshooters for the Union victory at Gettysburg; they prevented the Rebels from taking Little Round Top by diversion and delay. They also created chaos in the ranks.
7. The Chief of Ordinance, James Ripley, refused to order Sharps rifles because they wasted ammunition and shot too fast. When Berdan was finally able to appeal to Lincoln and demonstrate the accuracy of the Sharps, Berdan got the Sharps. Two noteworthy sharpshooters are Truman Head and Wyman White.
8. The next Board Meeting will be Wednesday, March 14, 2018, 10:00 AM, at Brookfield's Restaurant. All are invited.

**Barbara Leone, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance following the February 14th meeting was \$6,084.85. Thanks to Nicholas Scivoletto, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$40.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2018

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
March 14th	Dennis Kohlmann	"Blame it on Texas"
April 11th	Sue Pearson	"The Nancies"
May 9th	Lawrence Marvin III	"Civil War Weapons & Strategy"
June 13th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
July 11th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
August 8th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

## **2018 Membership**

The 2018 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2018. The dues are \$20.00 and you can renew at a monthly meeting or send to the Treasurer through the mail. For all checks, make them payable to **Sacramento Civil War Round Table** and send them to

George W. Foxworth  
9463 Salishan Court  
Sacramento, CA 95826-5233

Remember, you can also pay at any monthly meeting.

## **NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES**

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for that month's **Battle Cry**. However, you can submit articles at anytime. Please submit your items in Microsoft Word or regular email to:

[gwofforth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwofforth@sbcglobal.net)

Do not submit files that I cannot edit or copy.

The **Battle Cry** is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Submissions are subject to availability of space and size limitations. Submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization or the Editor. The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 254702, Sacramento, CA 95865-4702. <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org> is the web site address. Check the web for past newsletter editions and information about the group.

# 10 Facts About the Battle of Hampton Roads

March 8-9, 2012 marked the 150th anniversary of the historic Battle of Hampton Roads. It was here at Hampton Roads that the true power of ironclad warships would be discovered. And it was here that the revolutionary USS Monitor, with its armored rotating turret, would first enter combat. We hope that these ten interesting facts will help expand your knowledge and appreciation of this important Civil War naval Battle.



*Close up of the USS Monitor's turret (Library of Congress)*

**Fact #1:** The *CSS Virginia* and *USS Monitor* were not the first ironclad warships, but they were the first ironclads to battle against one another.

The *CSS Virginia* and the *USS Monitor* were not the first ironclad warships. In November 1859, the French Navy had launched *La Gloire*, the first ironclad battleship. The Royal Navy, in response to the new French warship, had launched *HMS Warrior*, an iron-hulled frigate, in October of 1861.

Even in the American Civil War, the *Virginia* and *Monitor* were not the first ironclads. To support Union naval operations on the rivers in the Western Theater, ironclad river gunboats (City Class gunboats) had been built, launched, and deployed by January 1862. These gunboats played an important role in the Battles for Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in February of 1862.

**Fact #2:** The Confederacy had great difficulty in sourcing the iron plating needed for the *CSS Virginia*.

In October of 1861, it was determined that the *CSS Virginia* (the converted ex-*USS Merrimack*) would require two layers of two inch iron armor plate covering its entire casement. Requiring upwards of 800 tons of iron, there simply was not that much iron available. To make up for this painful shortage, the Confederacy was reduced to scavenging old scrap iron, melting down old smoothbore cannon and iron tools, and even ripping up hundreds of miles of railroad track. The delays in obtaining and shaping these iron plates gave the Union more time to construct their counters to the growing menace of the *CSS Virginia*.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT HAMPTON ROADS

[Battle Overview](#)

[Battle Maps](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

[Battle of Hampton Roads: Then & Now](#)

[10 Facts about Hampton Roads](#)

[Recommended Books](#)

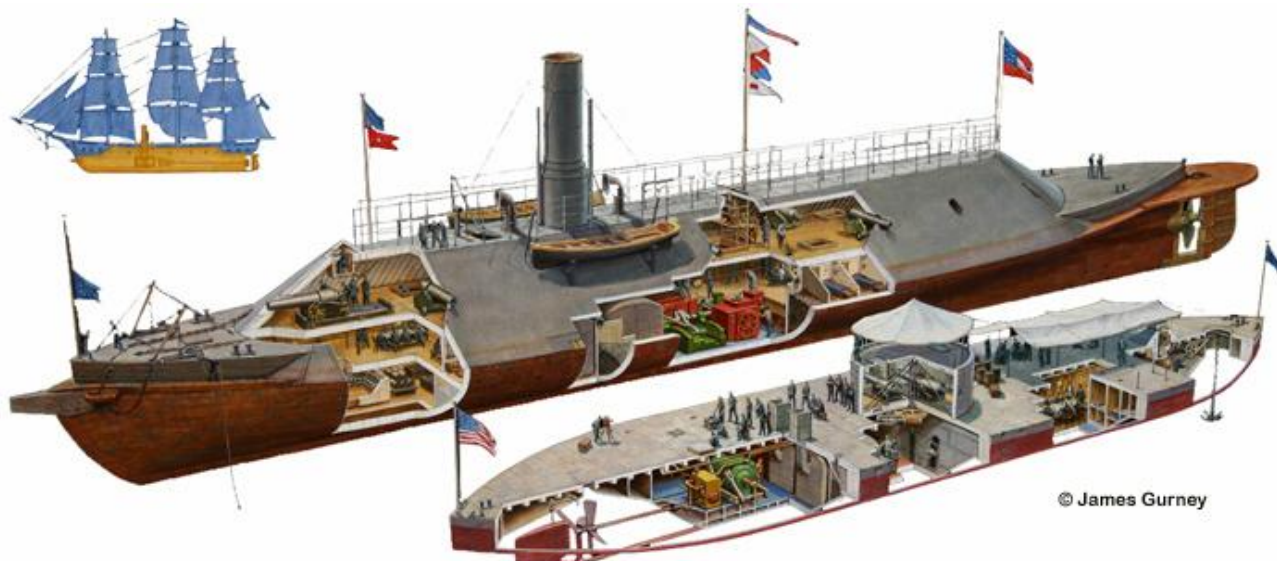
Fact #3: The first “trial run” of the *CSS Virginia* was its combat debut against the US Navy at Hampton Roads on March 8, 1862.

On the morning of March 8, 1862, the *CSS Virginia* made steam and moved slowly out into the Elizabeth River for its inaugural voyage. The *Virginia*'s engines had not been fully tested and the armored shields for its broadside gun ports had not been installed, but these "minor details" did not greatly concern the ship's new Captain, Franklin Buchanan. Buchanan, who had been selected by Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory for his aggressive tendencies, was determined to make the *Virginia*'s first voyage an attack on the nearby Union Navy.

Fact #4: The March 8, 1862 Battle that pitted the *Virginia* against wooden US Naval vessels was the worst defeat in the history of the United States Navy until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

While much attention has been focused on the near bloodless duel between the *USS Monitor* and *CSS Virginia* on March 9, 1862, the action between the *Virginia* and the US Navy on the preceding day was a far bloodier affair. The *CSS Virginia*'s attack on the *USS Cumberland* killed 121 out of 376 onboard and the subsequent attack on the *USS Congress* killed 27% of its crew – 120 out of 434. The *CSS Virginia*, on the other hand, suffered just two killed and a dozen wounded in its fight with the Union Navy.

Over the two-day Battle, the Federal Navy suffered 261 killed and 108 wounded in its struggle with the *Virginia* – more killed and wounded than any other sea battle in American history at that time. And March 8, 1862 would remain the bloodiest day in American naval history until December 7, 1941, when the Japanese Navy struck the American fleet at Pearl Harbor.



This comparison of the *CSS Virginia* and *USS Monitor* (in the foreground) shows the significant size differential between these two famous combatants. Where the *Virginia* was built on the hull of the *Merrimack*, the *USS Monitor* was built from the keel up. © James Gurney ([jamesgurney.com](http://jamesgurney.com))



Fact #5: Despite carrying twelve large caliber guns, one of the *CSS Virginia's* most lethal weapons was a simple 1,500 pound iron ram projecting from its bow.

Despite the many technological innovations that were on display during the Battle of Hampton Roads, one of the most lethal weapons employed was a large, 1,500 pound iron ram attached to the bow of the *CSS Virginia*. This simple weapon, altogether similar to what one would have found on a Roman Trireme or Ottoman Galley, devastated the *USS Cumberland*. The *Virginia* steamed straight for the *Cumberland* and punched through its starboard bow with its mighty ram. Ironically, the mortal blow delivered by the *Virginia's* ram almost led to its own destruction. With its ram stuck fast inside the *Cumberland*, the *Virginia* risked be carried under by the sinking Federal ship. After some effort, the *Virginia* was able to separate and back away, but its lethal ram had broken free.

During its battle with the *USS Monitor* the next day, the *CSS Virginia* sought to employ its ram, not knowing that this weapon now lay at the bottom of Hampton Roads.

See a painting of the sinking of the *USS Cumberland* by James Gurney: [See the Painting](#)



*Commodore Franklin Buchanan (Library of Congress)*

Fact #6: The *CSS Virginia's* Commander, Franklin Buchanan, was seriously wounded by musket ball on March 8 and did not participate in the *Virginia's* famous March 9 duel with the *USS Monitor*.

Per the well-established norms formed during the Age of Sail, it was customary for a defeated ship and its captain to formally surrender to their victorious counterparts. After viewing a white flag above the stricken *USS Congress*, Franklin Buchanan ordered that the *Congress* be taken as a prize. Unfortunately for the Confederates, Union soldiers on shore nearby knew or cared little for naval tradition and fired upon the exposed officers and men. Franklin Buchanan, who had gone on deck to supervise this surrender, was struck in the upper thigh by a bullet and was hastily taken back into the

interior of the *Virginia*. Removed to shore that evening, Buchanan turned over command of the CSS *Virginia* to his Executive Officer, Lieutenant Catesby ap Roger Jones who would command the famous ironclad during its fight with the *USS Monitor* the next day.

Buchanan, who would recover from his wound, captained the CSS *Tennessee* in its Battle with Rear Admiral David Farragut's squadron in the [Battle of Mobile Bay](#). During that Battle, Buchanan would suffer a broken leg and would surrender with his ship on August 5, 1864.

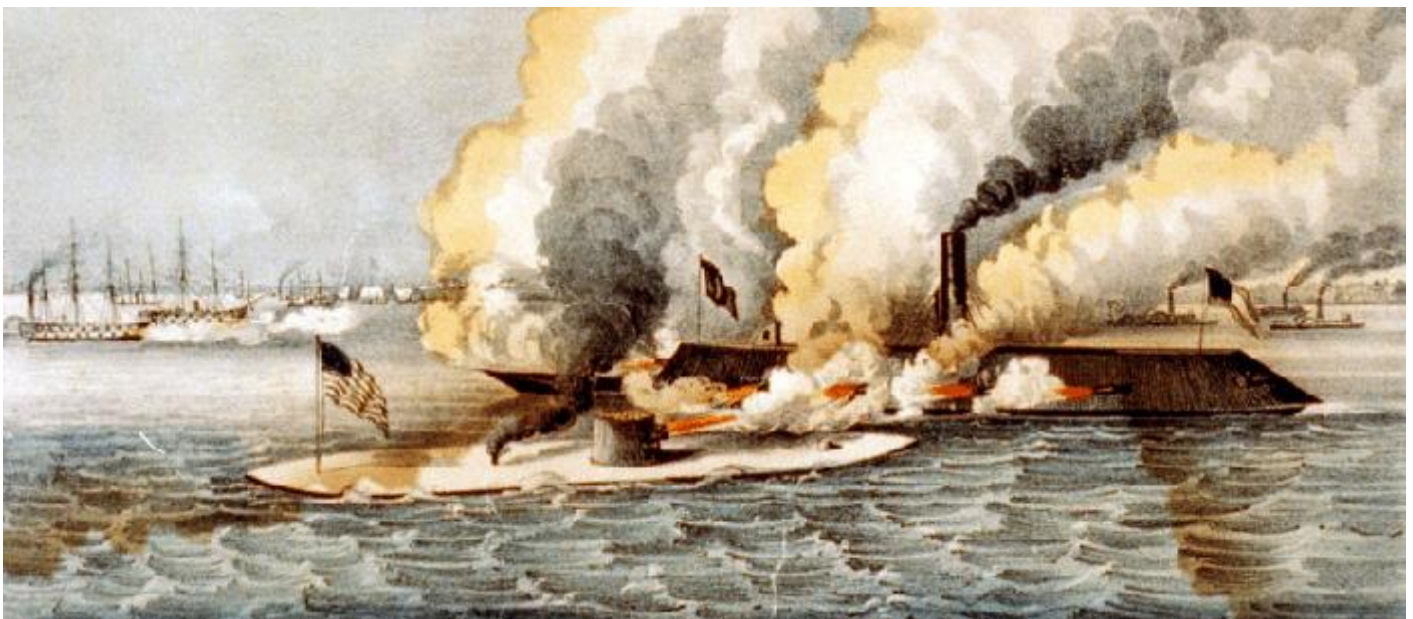
Fact #7: Sensing that their shells could do little damage, even at close range, the CSS *Virginia* ceased firing at the *Monitor* during the Battle.

Two hours of close-range naval gunfire finally convinced the Confederates of the futility of wasting shell and powder on the *USS Monitor*. Lieutenant John Eggleston onboard the CSS *Virginia*, when asked why his gun crews had stopped firing at the *Monitor*, stated that “[a]fter two hours of incessant firing I find that I can do her [the *Monitor*] about as much damage by snapping my thumbs at her every two minutes and a half.”

The CSS *Virginia's* armor penetrating capabilities were further reduced by its carrying only explosive shells, rather than solid shot. At one point in the Battle, crew members aboard the *Virginia* resorted to attempting to fire muskets into the open gun ports of the *Monitor*.

Fact #8: If the *USS Monitor* had used larger gunpowder charges in its 11-inch guns, it's likely that it would have holed and sunk the CSS *Virginia*.

The *USS Monitor* had been hurried down to Hampton Roads shortly after its launch and little time had been set aside for testing this new, radical weapon system. Despite being designed to carry two 12-inch Dahlgren naval guns, the *Monitor* launched with two smaller 11-inch Dahlgrens within its armored, rotating turret. To prevent any catastrophic gun bursting within the confined turret, each of the 11-inch guns was restricted to using 15-pound gunpowder charges. Even with this lower gunpowder charge, the 165 pound solid shot projectiles did much to dent and disfigure the armor plating on the *Virginia*. Later tests conducted after the Battle showed that if the *Monitor* had used 25 pound or 30 pound gunpowder charges that its 11-inch guns would have punctured the *Virginia's* hull with relative ease at close ranges.



This illustration shows the *USS Monitor* and *CSS Virginia* firing upon one another at close range during the Battle of Hampton Roads (Library of Congress)

Fact #9: Ironically, as the *CSS Virginia* fired more of its onboard ordnance, the ship became more vulnerable to attack.

Unlike the *USS Monitor*, whose belt of armor descended well below its waterline, the *CSS Virginia*'s iron plating extended barely to its waterline when fully loaded. With each broadside, the *Virginia* would expend 350 pounds of ordnance. And after two hours of firing upon the *Monitor* and other nearby ships, the *Virginia* had lightened its load by 5 tons. Ironically, as the ship became lighter it also became more vulnerable. As the ship lightened, its unarmored sides, below the iron casemate, were visible above water and could have been more easily punctured.



*Lt. John L. Worden, captain of the USS Monitor (Naval Historical Center)*

Fact #10: Franklin Buchanan and John L. Worden both became Superintendents of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

John L. Worden, promoted to Rear Admiral after the War, was the Commandant of the United States Naval Academy between 1869 and 1874. A drill field at the Academy is named for Worden.

Prior to the Civil War, Franklin Buchanan was the first Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy (1845 - 1847). The stately Buchanan House, current residence of Academy superintendents, is named after this famous Confederate Admiral.

**Submitted by Silver N. Marvin**