



Battle Cry



Vol. 43 No. 4 April 2003 Newsletter of Sacramento Civil War Round Table

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I thought Bob Bundy gave an excellent presentation on the Northern and Southern postal services during the Civil War. Anyone who has been overseas can appreciate the importance of mail from home.

On Feb. 16th there was a small article in the Sacramento Bee about the Southern response to the putting up of a statue of Abraham Lincoln and his son Tad at the National Park Service visitors center at the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond Virginia. The unveiling is April 5th the anniversary of Lincoln's walk though the streets of Richmond.

On Sunday Mar 30, there was another article in the Bee on the same event. The return of the Great Emancipator has not been universally embraced in a city where traffic on a main thorough must navigate around statues of Confederate heroes.

Here is a quote from "The Real Lincoln": In 1863, an international

convention met in Geneva

Switzerland to codify rules of warfare that had been in existence for more than a century. During the century prior to the War between the States, nations agreed that it was a war crime, punishable by imprisonment or death, for armies to (1) attack defenseless cities and town, (2) plunder or wantonly destroy civilian property, and (3) take from the civilian population more than what was necessary to feed and sustain an occupying army. The only just war was a defensive war.

To many in the South, Sherman's march to the sea and Sheridan's raid on the Shenandoah Valley were examples of waging war on civilians.

Today there is a war crimes tribunal meeting and the U. S. military is going to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties in Iraq.

This month we will have Dr Brian Clague speaking on Civil War medicine. This should be very interesting.

MINUTES

SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Wednesday, March 28, 2003

Sizzler Restaurant, 2030 Fulton Avenue, Sacramento

Attendance – 31

Members – 27

Dennis Kohlmann, President
Kit Knight, Vice Pres.
George Foxworth, Treasurer
Walt Bittle, Secretary
Dudley Albrecht
Jim Armstrong
George Beitzel
Joan Beitzel
Roy Bishop

Carol Breiter
Steve Breiter
Bernie Buenrostro
Ardith Cnota
Mitch Cnota
Don Hayden
Janet Junell
Robert Junell
Arthur Knight

Earl Martin
Virginia Martin
Jim Middleton
Bev Passerello
John Passerello
Paul Ruud
James Taff
Bob Williams
Maxine Wollen

Guests – 4

Bob Bundy
Leslie Michaels
Ted Swanson
Randy Wright

1. President Kohlmann opened the meeting by reviewing this day in Civil War history. New members and guests were introduced and welcomed. The minutes of February 26 were approved as printed, with the exception of moving James Taff from guest to member.
2. Paul Ruud explained our involvement at the Gibson Ranch reenactment event in May. Paul passed out a sign-up sheet for 15 volunteers to move students from station to station on Friday, May 2. He also asked for volunteers to man the booth on Saturday the 3rd and Sunday the 4th. More information will be available at the April 30 meeting.
3. Bob Bundy presented an excellent program about the Postal Service, a subject few of us knew anything about. He showed how the Postal Service developed as the country developed, and how it was affected by the Civil War. Mr. Bundy gave examples of both Union and Confederate problems and successes during the war. His presentation was well organized and well presented, and we appreciate his time and effort. Thanks, Bob.
4. Dudley Albrecht announced that *Cold Mountain* is scheduled for release in December.
5. Adjournment – Following the raffle, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Walt Bittle

Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the meeting of March 26 was \$1913.34
Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$51.

George Foxworth

Treasurer

**Reply to William S. Lind's
Article in the March 2003 Battle
Cry**

I thought the "*What if The South Had Won*" essay written by William S. Lind was undoubtedly the worst fantasy ramblings without substance that I have ever read. One thing is for sure, the "what if" is always the opening words for the subsequent fantasy trips for many a folk. History is exactly as the word describes, "his story"; events surrounding activities of people, places and things that have occurred in a given measured period **that has happened in the past**. You cannot change history, you cannot with any degree of accuracy or fact try to identify what would have resulted "if" things had been different. They simply were not different and will remain as they occurred. You can try and find out what the history encompassed. You can exaggerate history, you can embellish it, you can belittle and cover it up, you can seek the truth about it, you can lie about it, you can try and understand it, but you cannot change it. Nor can you accurately reenact it. The people, places and circumstances are very different. Reenactors cannot be the same people; they cannot physically or mentally reproduce conditions as they were. We cannot apply cultural, physical or social standards of today to history. One of my favorite quotes was from General Robert Edward Lee

who said following the war of Southern Independence: "After It Is All Over, As Stupid a Fellow as I Am Can See the Mistakes That Were Made."

I have great respect and empathy for those who attempt to reenact history through pageantry, imitation, role-playing or sympathy, but history cannot be reenacted accurately. People today may be similar in some regards but they are different. Those differences will simple not permit role players to closely imitate the people of history. You certainly can imagine what you wanted history to be, and emulate that imaginary images, but you can never substitute your role playing for the real events that occurred. History would never be the same even for those who lived it if they could have relived to do it all over again. People who are into explaining their interpretations of "what if" scenarios are living in a world of fantasy and should never be taken seriously. Reenactors should be viewed and enjoyed as pageant players who are trying to educate and reenergize the memory of history, but should never be considered actually re-living the same scenarios or events. Most historians, who study history in great detail, differ widely in what may have transpired in history. Of course, that is what makes history so interesting; the forum that it gives us to study it in earnest to divulge the most accurate story we can unfold.

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Given that the common understanding that people through history are all, at least, a little bit right (some more right than wrong and some more wrong than right), gives an impossible goal to find the exacting truth of history. Again, we can study it, embellish it, exaggerate it, belittle it, try to lay blame, try to create “good guys” and “bad guys” and attempt to make conclusions, but we can never change it or analyze accurately “what if” the outcome would have been different, because it simply wasn’t! Imagine us today to try and rationalize history of the civil war without actually experiencing the prejudices, the hardships of living off the land for four long years, suffering the personal trauma and stress and undergoing the social and physical toll that surely occurred. What If? reenact ?, play a strategic game?; How dare us, we have no right to presume and conclude for our forefather’s great sufferings!

Robert McGill April 10, 2003

A Report On The 7th Annual Knight’s Ferry Re-Enactment

By George W. Foxworth

The American Civil War Association (ACWA) 2003 re-enactment season began on March 22-23 in historic Knight’s Ferry, California. The ACWA invited the National Civil War Association (NCWA) and both clubs were combined for the

weekend. As a result, the 7th Annual Event had the largest turnout ever per an ACWA spokesperson.

Knight’s Ferry is administered by the Army Corps of Engineers and includes an 1860’s mill, a covered bridge, hills, and the Stanislaus River. The site accommodated the camps, horses, cannons, soldiers, civilians, and other attendees. In addition, the theater-type hillside gave a bird’s eye view of the entire battlefield. Surprisingly, the Corps did not charge the clubs or the public for the use of the facility.

The 2003 kick-off event was a complete success and the ACWA and NCWA are commended for their great work. We look ahead to the 2004 event, sometime in early spring.



A FAMILY QUARREL.

London Punch Sept. 28, 1861

The Confederate States Marine Corps: They Also Served.

The study of the Civil War has been approached from nearly every conceivable angle, however, the distinguished service rendered by both the United States and Confederate States Marine Corps was essentially overlooked. This is particularly true of the Confederate Marine Corps.

The Confederate Marine Corps was established in the spring of 1861 and was authorized to have a maximum complement of 990 officers and enlisted men. The Corps was plagued by recruiting difficulties throughout the war and reached its largest point in October of 1864 when there were 571 Marines at arms. The Marine Corps was commanded by Col. Lloyd James Beall. In 1862 the Marines established a base at Drewry's Bluff Virginia and named it Camp Beall.

The Confederate Marine Corps duties included policing the Confederate Naval Bases nearly every gunboat, ironclad and commerce raider had a detachment of Marines on board to serve as guards, boarding parties and as artillery gunners. The Marines developed a reputation as expert gunners. Marines served with distinction in the naval battles of Port Royal, Hampton Roads, Mobile Bay and Fort Fisher.

The Confederate Marines were also called upon for special service which in two instances involved Missourians. In February of 1863, the Naval Dept authorized a plan to train army, navy and marine units to destroy ironclads by boarding them. This was in anticipation of a Union attack of Charleston which occurred in April of 1863. The Marine unit was commanded by Captain Thomas S. Wilson of

Missouri. The attack was repulsed and the Marines were not called into service.

Likewise, in July of 1864, General Robert E. Lee devised a plan where a battalion of Marines were to slip thru the naval blockade and make an amphibious landing at Point Lookout above Washington D. C. to free the Confederate Prisoners of War there. This was to be done in support of General Jubal Early's raid on Washington. The force was led again by Thomas S. Wilson and included 2nd Lt. Henry H. McCune also of Missouri. The ships carrying the Marines were called back and the mission aborted due to perceived leaks regarding their activities.

Another interesting footnote of history involves Confederate Marine Sgt. George Stephenson of the infamous commerce raider CSS Sumter. After a long career the CSS Sumter was abandoned at Gilbralter and a small force was left behind including a Marine Guard commanded by Sgt. Stephenson. The Commanding officer Midshipman Williams Andrews was killed in October 1862 by a seaman and Sgt. Stephenson became the only Marine Federal or Confederate to command a ship of war in the Civil War.

As the fortunes of the Confederacy grew dark in the spring of 1865, Navy and Marines personnel were brought to Drewry's Bluff and formed into fighting units such as Tucker's Naval Battalion which fought with distinction at the battle of Saylor's Creek. In addition, when Robert E. Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox Court House, it included four Marine officers and 21 enlisted Marines.

by Kevin P. Gallen

Little Joe's Nurse, 1864

Of his four children,
Little Joe was President Davis'
favorite. The five year old
was allowed to interrupt
meetings with General Lee.
The War, now in its
third year and trailing
thousands of bodies,
has to end. The South
can't replace
dead men. Boys—barely
in their teens—are marching
off to fight. Old men
—senile and boneless—
are shouldering rifles.
Yankee papers rightly
Accuse us of robbing
the cradle and the grave.
And now the cradle has been
plundered again. Little Joe
fell off a railing
and plunged
20 feet to a brick
pavement. The child died
as his mother—five months
pregnant—reached his side.
The First Lady screamed
for ten hours while
the President paced
and grieved. His son
was dead and his nation
was dying. All night,
I could only hear
the tramp of his boots,
the flapping curtains
and shattering screams.
And I, the Irish nurse
who should have
but didn't—my God,
I didn't, I couldn't,
I didn't—prevent
the tragedy, hovered,
feeling my soul had been
sucked out
by the wind.

--Kit Knight

**James Birdseye McPherson,
Major General, U. S. Army**

November 14, 1828 – July 22, 1864

James McPherson, a native of Ohio, graduated first in the West Point class of 1853. He taught engineering at the academy and worked on river and harbor improvements and sea coast fortifications on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts after graduation.

As the Civil War progressed he rose rapidly in rank and eventually switched from staff assignments to line command duties. His first wartime posting was as an ADC to General Halleck, but he joined Grant's staff as chief engineer at the time of the campaign against Forts Henry and Donelson. He went on to serve at Shiloh and participate in the advance on Corinth. He commanded one wing of Grant's initial drive into central Mississippi to secure Vicksburg and open the Mississippi River. With the reorganization of the army he took charge of the newly created 17th Corps and led it successfully during the remainder of the Vicksburg Campaign.

Upon the conclusion of that campaign McPherson took part in Sherman's Meridian Campaign before transferring to Chattanooga as commander of the Army of the Tennessee. He led that army during the Atlanta Campaign, and he quickly became one of Sherman's favorites, who said of him "If he lives he'll outdistance Grant and myself." It was before Atlanta that he was killed when he rode into a band of Confederate skirmishers while making a personal reconnaissance. The monument shown in the attached picture marks the location where he was killed. His body was moved to his hometown of Clyde, Ohio for burial.

James McPherson was the highest-ranking union soldier killed in action during the Civil War. He was thirty-five years old.

Bob Williams: 4-02-03

The Sacramento Civil War Round Table meets the last Wednesday of every month except November and December. (A meeting is held either at the end of Nov. or the beginning of Dec.) We meet at the Sizzler 2030 Fulton Ave. Sacramento, CA (Near Fulton and Cottage Way) at 7:00PM. Members and guests gather for food and conversation at 6:00PM. The Board of Directors meets at Carrows, 29th and J St. at 11:30AM to 1:00PM on the Wed. two weeks before the regular meeting for that month.

Battle Cry Editor

The Battle Cry is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Please submit items to the editor for publication no later than the meeting day of the Board of Directors, either at that meeting, (see above) by U.S. mail or by e-mail. BattleCryEditor@aol.com 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 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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