

# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
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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:** John Martini was certainly worth waiting for. The history of Fort Alcatraz and the other forts in and around the bay was fascinating and the visual presentation outstanding. John and his fellow rangers have done a great job bringing out the military aspects of the area and we are grateful to all those working to keep the interest alive. John's expertise represents years of solid research. I am happy to have his two books and look forward to another visit under his tutelage.

Thanks to Fred Bohmfalk for arranging to bring James "Bud" Robertson to our area in October. We have to reschedule to Tuesday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, and are searching for a larger room so we can accommodate the anticipated crowd. Be sure to put this on your "not to be missed" schedule.

The plans for the November 2006 conference are proceeding well. We have four speakers lined up, Ed Bearss, Craig Symonds, Jim Stanberry and Dennis Ringle. My thanks to Dennis Kohlmann and loyal committee members Bob Williams, Paul Ruud, Carol Breiter, and Fred Bohmfalk.

Looking forward to seeing you July 13<sup>th</sup> for Paul Ruud's talk on the Lincoln Assassination. Come early for dinner and conversation.

**NEXT MEETING!!! July 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM at the Hofbrau on the northeast corner of El Camino & Watt Ave. Come early for dinner and conversation. Paul Ruud will give a presentation on Lincoln's Assassination.**

**SEE UPCOMING PROGRAMS ON PAGE 3.**

## Treasurers Report

The cash balance following the June 8, 2005 meeting was \$1,141.45. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$90.00.

**George Foxworth**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**WEDNESDAY JUNE 8, 2005**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT 2500 WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO**

**Attendance-37**

**Members - 34**

Don Hayden, President	Ardith Cnota	Earl Martin	Drew Van Winkle
Susan Williams, Vice President	Mitchell Cnota	Leslie Michaels	Robert Williams
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Lydia Donaldson	Jim Middleton	Maxine Wollen
Eddie Keister, Secretary	William Donaldson	Betty Mitchell	John Zasso
Ken Berna	Kirk Fujikawa	Maurice Mitchell	<u>Guest-3</u>
Roy Bishop	Susan Katt	John Nevins	John Martini
Watt Bittle	Ken Kitchen	Paul Ruud	Sharon McGaughey
Fred Bohmfalk	Mary Lou Lentz	Brad Schall	Dan Winkleman
Steve Breiter	Ken Lentz	Bernard Scherr	
Bernie Bvenrostro	Virginia Martin	Richard Sickert	

1. Meeting started at 7:05. Guest were acknowledged and welcomed. Member Paul Rudd brought a book for our raffle written by Craig Symonds, who will be one of our speakers at the 06' conference. Member Fred Bohmfalk announced our speakers for Oct - James Roberson and for Feb or March - Brian Wills. "This Day in Civil War History" was read.
2. Our guest speaker was John Martini, a former Park Ranger who worked at Alcatraz. His topic - "Alcatraz during the Civil War." He also covered Ft. Pointe and Ft. Mason and the cannons built to defend them. (*Big cannons!*) The presentation was accompanied with interesting slides of photos dating from that time. John answered many questions. He also brought copies of a book he wrote, "Fortress Alcatraz, Guardian of the Golden Gate." He sold quite a few copies and graciously autographed them. Thanks John - comeback and visit anytime.
3. Raffle was held - meeting ended at 8:40.

**Eddie Keister**  
**Secretary**

<b>COMING PROGRAMS</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
July	Paul Ruud	Lincoln Assassination
August	John Nevins	CSS Hunley
September	George Beitzel	Lincoln at Ft. Stevens and Presidential Military Exp.
October	“Bud” Robertson	Jackson and Lee
November	Ray Bisio	Meade at Gettysburg: Making Friends into Foes
December	Maurice Mitchell	Reconstruction

## **CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST MOURNS LOSS OF HISTORIAN AND PRESERVATIONIST BRIAN POHANKA**

**(Alexandria, Va., 6/16/2005)** – The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) learned this morning of the untimely death of a true giant in the historic preservation community, historian and preservationist Brian C. Pohanka. CWPT President James Lighthizer made the following statement in the wake of Brian’s passing:

“Today the battlefield preservation community, and the Civil War community at large, mourn the loss of historian and preservationist Brian C. Pohanka. Few people have contributed more to keeping the memory of the Civil War alive for the present generations of Americans. He will be greatly missed.

“Brian was a familiar face on many Civil War documentaries. He could be found on such programs as Civil War Journal and Ken Burns’ landmark The Civil War, among countless others. Brian’s commentary was always sharp, insightful, and to the point. He further shared his perspective through countless books and articles on the war, and helped other young authors with advice and encouragement. Brian’s true passion centered on the famous Zouave soldiers, especially the renowned Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry.

“Arguably Brian’s most important contribution – in a life full of great contributions – was in 1987, when he helped start the battlefield preservation movement that we know today. Brian hosted some of the first meetings Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, a group that would later become the Civil War Preservation Trust. Thanks to Brian’s foresight and commitment, hallowed battlefields that would otherwise have been paved over remain for future generations to visit and venerate. We at the Civil War Preservation Trust are proud and honored to carry on the work he started.

“The Civil War Preservation Trust’s Board of Trustees, members and staff join me in expressing our deepest sympathy to Brian’s wife Cricket and the rest of his family. Although he is gone, Brian’s passion for preservation and history will continue to inspire Civil War buffs and preservationists for decades to come.”

With 70,000 members, CWPT is the largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. Its mission is to preserve our nation’s endangered Civil War battlefields and to promote appreciation of these hallowed grounds. CWPT’s website is [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org)

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[Jim Campi, Policy and Communications Director, Civil War Preservation Trust](#)

## Site of Civil War battle could vanish under development

By David Tanner ,May 31, 2005, The Jackson County Examiner (MO)

The Little Blue River may have had a more reddish color in October 1864. The Battle of the Little Blue, a significant Jackson County battle during the Civil War, began at a bridge south of what is now U.S. 24 in eastern Independence. Some historians say 10,000 Confederate soldiers battled 3,000 from the Union, with about 500 casualties per side. "That's a lot of folks," historian Tim Cox of Independence said. Cox descends from lineage on both sides of the battle lines in the Little Blue conflict.

Cox is leading a charge of his own to save the battle site from encroaching development and a proposed roadway. "Historical importance is one thing. Preservation is another," he said. On May 21, the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation placed the Little Blue battle site in its top-10 endangered historic places in the state. Cox nominated the site for the distinction.

Although the exact boundaries of the battle are difficult to determine, Cox knows the riverbanks were part of the scene, most likely in what is now Independence, and north of U.S. 24 in rural Jackson County. A home built in 1856 by Lawson Moore, who vacated it in 1863 because of Order No. 11, still stands near the site. "The Lawson Moore home was used as an infirmary during the battle," Cox said.

Plans continue to advance on an expressway, referred to as the South Missouri River Corridor Expressway or the Lewis and Clark Expressway. Whatever name the road eventually carries will eventually link Kansas City's Front Street, the Missouri River corridor in Sugar Creek, and eastern Independence via the Little Blue Parkway. Somewhat symbolic, but under a different context, Independence City Manager on Monday referred to the construction as the expressway from the north meeting in the middle with the parkway from the south.

While the north and south didn't see eye-to-eye during the Civil War, the parties involved in the current battle are looking for some middle ground. The preferred plan, according to the Mid-America Regional Council, the metro's coordinating channel for things like highway funding, is for the expressway at the western edge of the battle site.

### **Preservationists are concerned.**

"It will run within 50 yards of the Lawson Moore home," Independence Heritage Commissioner Vicki Nave said. Development may also cap over a spring that emits 40,000 gallons per day, and may take out a rocky ledge where cannons were fired from during the battle. Nave views the area of the Little Blue Valley as more than just a Civil War battle site.

Jackson County resident Jabez Smith, prior to and at the time of the battle, was one of the largest slaveholders in Missouri with 311. Historian Annette Curtis noted in a collection of Smith articles and photographs that up to 200 slaves died from a cholera outbreak in 1850 and were buried in a mass grave in a persimmon grove. The valley contains many springs, a few cemeteries, and ties to the Lewis and Clark expedition of the early 1800s. "You could link it into every historical thing Independence has," Nave said.

Officials with the regional council and city officials acknowledge the battle site, and are currently going through the public process on the road's layout. Independence Planning Manager Tom Kuntz said the city hopes to complete its portion of the Little Blue Parkway in 2007 up to U.S. 24 from the south. Kuntz said the expressway corridor along the Missouri River is on MARC's long-term plan for 2020. "I think the objective is to find out what's there, and not necessarily kill the road," Kuntz said. Preservationists would like the chance to speak before city and Jackson County governments.

A subdivision, planned by a private landowner, may eat into the eastern portion of the battle site. Cox hopes to at least excavate the area for artifacts before houses get built. He would much rather have the ridges and battle location left intact. "In reality, it's coming," he said. "The best we can probably do is have pull-off areas and lookouts."

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<b>From:</b>	"Ken Hansgen, Shiloh Guide" <Ken@ShilohGuide.com>
<b>To:</b>	battlecryeditor@sbcglobal.net
<b>Subject:</b>	An amusing item for your use
<b>Date:</b>	Fri, 27 May 2005 11:41:44 -0500

Some Civil War commanders managed to get their points across by using humor. Here is an example from the headquarters of Brig. Gen. Morgan L. Smith, a brigade commander in Wm. Tecumseh Sherman's Division encamped at Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1862:

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE

July 1, 1862.

It has come to the knowledge of the commanding officer of the brigade that a straggler of General Hurlbut's division, on the occasion of our first visit to Holly Springs, was captured [by Confederates], and after being shot to make him tell things that he did not know, he was turned loose in the woods and bloodhounds put on his track. Anything further of his fate is not known. I tell you this to put you on your guard against straggling over one hundred yards from your stacks of arms. I hear also a report concerning some members of the Eighth Missouri, which is too terrible for belief. It is nothing less than an attempt to tarnish the good reputation of their brothers of the Sixth Missouri by borrowing their elegant hats to steal sweet potatoes in.

By order of Brigadier-General M. L. Smith

I. C. Hill, A. A. D. C.

(This is from: The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry, in the Civil War, 1861-1865" by a Committee of the Regiment. 1887. p.151. Reprinted by Higginson Book Co., Salem, MA.)

**Shelby Foote, noted author,  
dies Monday June 27, 2005.**

Best known for his role in the Ken Burns PBS documentary "The Civil War" Shelby Foote wrote a panoramic history of the Civil War and several novels including "Tournament", "Follow Me Down", "Love in a Dry Season" and "Jordan Country" mostly dramatizing the decline of the old agrarian ideal in the new South.

Born on November 17, 1916, he was 88 when he died.  
Source: Sacramento Bee 6/28/05 page B5

**Editor's Note:  
Effective in August  
2005, I will send electronic  
Battle Cry's in Adobe Format  
to those who wish to receive  
them instead of the paper  
copy. Those wanting  
electronic copies need to  
send me an e-mail stating  
that so I can verify I have  
your correct e-mail address.  
My address is:  
[battlecryeditor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:battlecryeditor@sbcglobal.net)**

# Civil Service

*Nearly 150 years after their celebrated battle far from home, a Union ship and its Confederate foe are remembered in France* ~ BY DAN CARLINSKY

IN A 19TH-CENTURY hillside cemetery above a bustling port, two weathered stone crosses mark the graves of George Appleby and James King, Confederate seamen who died in a Civil War naval battle on June 19, 1864, seven nautical miles offshore. A few feet away stands a seven-foot-high granite obelisk memorializing William L. Gowen, who died eight days later from injuries received in the same skirmish. Gowen was a Yankee.

It's unusual for Civil War enemies to wind up as next-door neighbors for eternity. But odder still, these graves—and the watery battlefield where the three met their fate—are thousands of miles from Union or Rebel territory. They're in France.

In that contest 140 years ago, the Union sloop USS *Kearsarge* sank the notorious rebel raider CSS *Alabama* in the English Channel just off Cherbourg, on the Normandy coast. In a ceremony there this past September, the Civil War Preservation Trust named Cherbourg, a transatlantic port city that has served U.S.-bound British ships from the *Titanic* to the *Queen Mary 2*, an official site of the American Civil War—the only such site outside the United States. The designation was the latest recognition of the enduring interest in the remarkable battle and especially its loser, the greatest Confederate commerce raider of them all.

During the war, disruption of Union commerce became a key part of the Confederacy's strategy. But with Southern ports blockaded, Confederacy leaders looked abroad to assemble a fleet. British merchants, despite their country's official neutrality in the war, favored their cotton-trading partner. While the British government pretended not to notice, the *Alabama* was built and launched in secrecy.

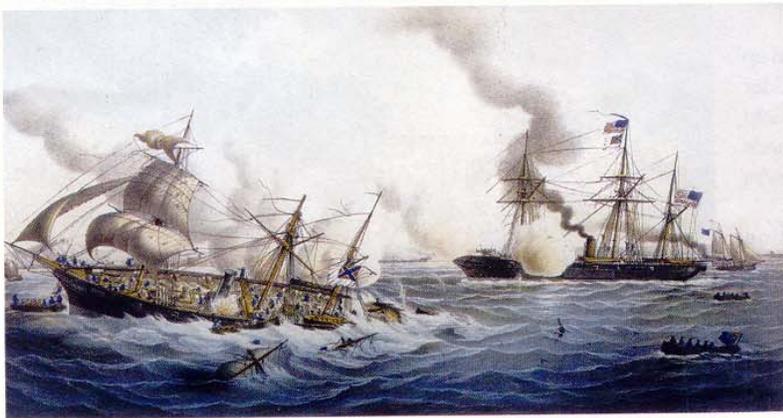
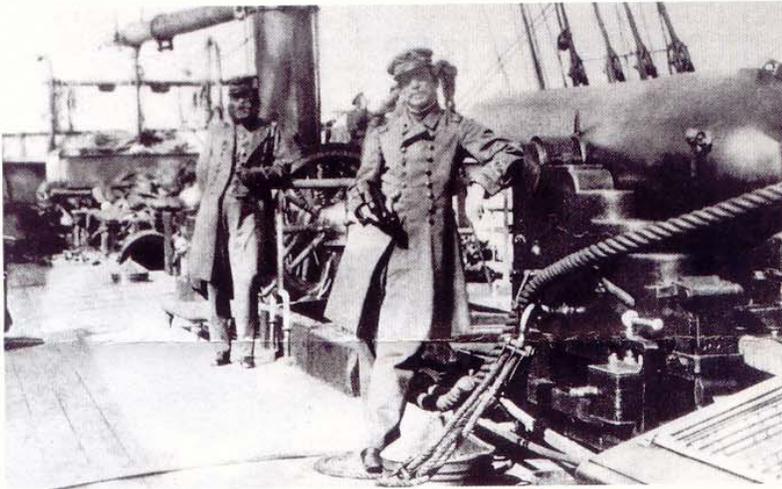
In 1862, at a cost of \$250,000, the John Laird Sons shipyard, near Liverpool, produced Hull No. 290, a 220-foot ves-



Cherbourg, the only official Civil War site outside the United States, is the final resting place for sailors from both sides.

sel of the finest elm and oak, with a bottom sheathed in copper. She was a hybrid beauty, with three masts of strong but flexible yellow pine and rigging of the best Swedish iron wire as well as twin 300-horsepower, coal-fired steam engines. At the end of July, she was ready for delivery. Not a single armament was on board. Yet.

“The holes in the poor old *Alabama* were large enough to admit a wheelbarrow.”



“My intention is to fight,” Captain Semmes (top, right, on the *Alabama* in 1863) relayed to the *Kearsarge*. During the battle, the ships circled each other “like wrestlers.”

Spies in and around the yard had tipped off the U.S. consul at Liverpool, but by the time the British authorities were persuaded to issue a confiscation order, No. 290 was gone. Under a British flag and captain, she sailed down the Mersey River, ostensibly for a trial run, with a small crew and a party of men and several women. Lunch and champagne were served, and there was music and dancing, but it was all a ruse. A Confederate agent suddenly off-loaded the guests to a waiting tugboat and sent them home.

The new ship went on to Wales, then to the Azores, where she was armed, supplied and outfitted with

eight guns, a mostly English crew and a Confederate captain, the flamboyant Raphael Semmes, whose generously waxed handlebar mustache prompted the nickname Old Beeswax. Maryland-born but living in Mobile, Alabama, Semmes, a lawyer and naval officer already famed as a raider captain, named the cruiser for his adopted home state.

The *Alabama* had a brief but stunning career. She savaged the American whaling fleet around the Azores, then prowled the waters from the Caribbean and Brazil to India and Singapore, picking off unprotected ships carrying corn, wheat and lumber from the United States, or whale oil, rice, silk and tea on

the return route. She would approach her prey while flying the Stars and Stripes or another decoy flag, then, at the last minute, raise the Confederacy’s Stars and Bars, board, take prisoners, confiscate the goods and burn the ship. In 22 months at sea, the *Alabama* seized 64 merchant vessels, destroyed most of them, sank the warship USS *Hatteras* and took 2,000 prisoners, always keeping a step ahead of Union warships in pursuit.

On Saturday, June 11, 1864, the *Alabama* entered the harbor at Cherbourg in search of coal and repairs. Union agents alerted John Winslow, captain of the *Kearsarge*, anchored in Holland. By Tuesday afternoon, the 201-foot, seven-gun *Kearsarge* was stationed off Cherbourg. Cornered, Semmes chose to fight. In a letter to an intermediary, he wrote: “I desire you to say to the U.S. Consul that my intention is to fight the *Kearsarge* as soon as I can make the necessary arrangements. . . . I beg she will not depart before I am ready to go out.” Winslow replied that he had no intention of leaving.

Word of the impending battle spread, and by 8 a.m. Sunday, high spots around Cherbourg were “completely covered with people,” according to a newspaper account at the time. About 15,000 spectators and journalists took up positions. Some headed out in small boats, hoping to see the action close up.

At 10:20, the *Alabama* left port with an armed French escort, there to ensure that France’s three-mile boundary was not breached. To make sure Semmes couldn’t slip back into French waters, Winslow headed the *Kearsarge* out to sea, and the *Alabama* followed. Several miles offshore, the Union sloop wheeled and steamed back in. The *Alabama* opened fire. The two ships exchanged several broadsides, then circled each other seven times in a nautical ballet, stopped and “took each other’s measure like wrestlers,” a spectator wrote. More shot and shell. Some of the *Alabama*’s powder, long in storage, was too old and damp to perform. Equally important, the *Kearsarge* wore

“It’s strange that the victor gets less interest than the ship that went down.”



Descendants of both captains “got along very well,” says recovery project volunteer Ulane Bonnel, with Oliver Semmes, great-great-grandson of the *Alabama*’s captain.

a sort of bulletproof vest: a wall of thick anchor chains draped over each side and camouflaged with wooden planks.

Semmes, his right arm hit and bleeding and his ship crippled, tried to break for the Cherbourg coast, but as an officer later recalled, “the holes in the side of the poor old *Alabama* were large enough to admit a wheelbarrow.” Stern-first, the *Alabama* started to sink. After little more than an hour, the fight was over. The *Kearsarge* picked up most of the survivors, but an English yacht, the *Deerbound*, spirited Semmes and 41 others—about a quarter of the *Alabama* crew—to safety in England.

The sinking of the *Alabama* boosted morale for the North. But some say its effect on the war was minor. “It was little more than a symbolic victory,” says William Marvel, author of the 1996 history *The Alabama and the Kearsarge*. “There were still other raiders preying on Union ships and the deteriorating *Alabama* had already done its most serious damage to U.S. trade.”

After the war, when the United

States demanded reparations from Britain for failing to enforce its commitment to neutrality, the *Alabama* was the main cause for complaint. The two countries submitted to arbitration by a five-nation tribunal—a precedent that would help point the way to the founding 70 years later of the International Court of Justice at The Hague. In 1872, the United States won \$15.5 million in damages.

IN NOVEMBER 1984, a French minesweeper on a training run in the Channel discovered the wreck of the *Alabama* on the ocean floor nearly 200 feet down. Under international law, the remains belong to the United States, as successor to the Confederacy. But France’s waters now extend to 12 miles, so the wreck lies in French territory. It took five years to forge a binational agreement for underwater archaeological exploration of the site. In 1999, after a decade of French benefactors, the project received Department of Defense funds to cover most expenses

for diving and conservation—about \$652,000 to date.

The English Channel is a challenge for underwater archaeologists. “Tidal currents are three to four knots,” says Ulane Bonnel, a Texan living in Paris since 1947 and a former president of the French Commission for Maritime History, who is the volunteer spark behind the recovery project. “At that depth the water is extremely cold. Our divers can only work two or three weeks a year, and only for the half-hour or so each day when tides are gentlest.” In more than 1,000 dives, nearly 300 items have been recovered, many astonishingly intact. Among them: dishes and glassware, a sailor’s meerschaum pipe still smelling of tobacco, and hand-pumped flush toilets with brass fittings and English country scenes painted on their porcelain bowls. The final dives for the recovery project are scheduled for this summer.

The prize so far is a 3.5-ton Blakely cannon still attached to its pivoting bed and still loaded when retrieved; it greets visitors in the lobby of the Cité de la Mer, Cherbourg’s new waterside maritime museum. When officials gathered around the cannon last September for the Civil War dedication, Oliver Semmes, a great-great-grandson of the captain, was among the honored guests. “It’s strange that 140 years later the victor gets less interest than the ship that went down,” he says. “But the *Alabama* had quite a record.”

Other objects recovered from the the raider are on display at the Museum of Mobile in Alabama and at the Naval Historical Center at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. Also at the Navy Yard are objects from the *Kearsarge*, removed in a refit 20 years before it wrecked off the coast of Central America in 1894.

Bonnel says she once assembled descendants of both captains to watch a documentary film about the ships and the recovery work. “You know,” she says, “they all got along very well.”

DAN CARLINSKY writes books and magazine articles. He lives in Connecticut.