



**Volume 47, No 8**  
**August 2007**  
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**Battle Cry deadline is**  
**1:00PM Wed. two weeks**  
**before the regular meeting.**  
Items can be given the  
editor by mail or e-mail.

# Battle Cry

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



## President's Message:

I don't know if the Russians were just "showing their flag," training their navy, or cruising to escape the cold weather, but Mitch tells us they were on both coasts during the last half of the war. The reception was really royal in San Francisco – my guess is that then, as now, those of us in the west were trying to tell those in the east that things of importance and interest do happen out here! Thanks to Mitch for a most fascinating story.

I have been getting inquiries regarding the process involved in bringing interesting speakers to the roundtable. It is very simple – if your suggested speaker in no way obligates the roundtable, pass the speakers name on to Dennis Kohlmann, the program chairman. In all other cases, refer your idea to the board by contacting a board member. The board members and their contact information appears on the front page of every Battle Cry. The formal written guidelines appear elsewhere in this edition of the Battle Cry.

I want to pause for a minute to say thank you to some quiet volunteers. **George Foxworth** arrives early at each Wednesday meeting night and arranges the room to create that warm reception we feel as we arrive. Whenever the speaker wants to include slides in the presentation, **Fred Bohmfalk** brings his overhead projector and **Don Hayden** brings his screen. Many anonymous members bring raffle prizes for John Zasso to raffle off for the benefit of our treasury. Each one of you contributes by attending the Wednesday night meetings – without the crowd, the show does not go on! My congratulations and thanks to everyone and please keep up the good work!

I will be out of town on August 8<sup>th</sup> (our next meeting) so Dennis Kohlmann will serve double duty. He will preside over the meeting in the gavel sense and then speak to the group about "**the Southern Cavalry during the 1863 Pennsylvania campaign.**" I've heard for years that JEB Stuart fell short of his normal high standard in action leading up to Gettysburg – please pay attention so that you can clear that up for me!

**Paul Ruud**  
**President**

## Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the June 13, 2007 meeting was \$2,153.08. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$47.00.

The cash balance following the July 11, 2007 meeting was \$2,193.83. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$79.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**JULY 11, 2007**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO, CA**

Attendance-38

Members-32

Paul Ruud, President  
Dennis Kohlmann, Vice President  
George Foxworth, Treasurer  
Eddie Keister, Secretary  
Joan Beitzel  
George Beitzel  
Roy Bishop  
Sharon Bogart  
Steve Bogart  
Fred Bohmfalk

Terry Bowen  
Ardith Cnota  
Mitchell Cnota  
Lydia Donaldson  
Bill Donaldson  
Brad Friedman  
Alan Geiken  
Kyle Glasson  
Robert Hanley  
Don Hayden

Pam Hubbard  
Chuck Hubbard  
Lowell Lardie  
Victor Le  
Jim Middleton  
Vivian Miller  
Betty Mitchell  
Maurice Mitchell  
John Nevins  
Brad Schall  
Bob Williams  
Susan Williams

Guest-6

Andrew Caldwell  
Jim Frank  
Monica Johnson  
Kris Scivoletto  
Nicholas Scivoletto  
Alex

1. Meeting started at 7:05. President Ruud welcomed members and guest. He then spoke a bit about Robert Parker Parott- a West Point graduate and later Foundry owner who sold guns to the government at cost.
2. Member Mitch Cnota gave a great presentation on the Russian Navy coming to the West Coast, the great fanfare, and the ball given in their honor in San Francisco. He presented slides showing dance cards and menus and some of the vessels. Thank you Mitch!
3. Member Don Hayden suggested we go to our SCWRT web site to listen to the music provided to go with the captions.
4. Raffle held (Congrats to all the winning visitors!) and meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Eddie Keister, Secretary

| <b>Coming Programs 2007</b> |                  |                                   |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Date</b>                 | <b>Speaker</b>   | <b>Topic</b>                      |
| August 8 <sup>th</sup>      | Dennis Kohlmann  | So. Calvary in 1863 PA Campaign   |
| Sept. 12 <sup>th</sup>      | Ron Perisho      | 3D Photos                         |
| October 10 <sup>th</sup>    | Brad Schall      | Battle of Fair Oaks               |
| Nov. 14 <sup>th</sup>       | Katrina Worley   | Home Spun Uniforms-The Real Story |
| Dec. 12 <sup>th</sup>       | Maurice Mitchell | TBA                               |
| January 9 <sup>th</sup>     | Susan Williams   | War Horse                         |

## **Sacramento CWRT Speaker Policy July 25, 2007**

A flow of interesting speakers is the lifeblood of the Round Table; they educate, they entertain, they motivate, and they inspire. These reasons and more establish a need and a desire for quality speakers.

There are certain circumstances where an invitation to speak creates an obligation for the Round Table. Obligations, stated or implied, could include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Travel expenses,
- (2) Hosting a speaker's introduction to the area,
- (3) Housing,
- (4) Finding a meeting place appropriate to the occasion,
- (5) Advertising or other efforts to increase the attendance,
- (6) Transportation from the airport, and
- (7) Special audio-visual equipment.

A member of the Round Table who would like to speak or who has a suggestion for another speaker, will be guided by the following:

- (1) When the proposed speaker would in no way obligate the Round Table, the member simply makes the request of the Program Chairperson.
- (2) Members are encouraged to discuss speaking opportunities with potential guest speakers, including those jointly involving other organizations, but will obtain approval of the Board of Directors prior to making specific invitations in situations involving any of the above obligations.

There are no "exceptions" to these guidelines.

## **Civil War Medical Library**

In case you haven't already heard, I would like to tell you about the Civil War Medicine Collection room at the University of California at Davis' new Blaisdell Medical Library in Sacramento, California.

The collection was assembled and donated by F. William Blaisdell, MD, of San Francisco, who is known as the "father of the modern trauma center." Dr. Blaisdell is also an avid student of the Civil War, and his great-grandfather Solon Greenleaf Blaisdell (also a surgeon) served in the 12<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry. Below is a link to a brief article which mentions the bullet that struck Solon Blaisdell at the Battle of Cold Harbor (which is on display in the Civil War Medicine room along with other relics of the war). The collection includes many rare and important reference works on surgery and medicine as practiced in the Union and Confederate armies, which is housed in an attractive room with Mort Kunstler artwork. I highly recommend a visit to this impressive library.

The Blaisdell Medical Library is open to the public and located at 4610 X Street in Sacramento.

**Above e-mail received from Sebastian Nelson [sebnelson@gmail.com](mailto:sebnelson@gmail.com)**

The library phone number is: 734-3529 and they are open Mon-Thurs 7AM-10PM, Fri 7AM to 6PM, Sat 9AM to 6PM, Sun 10AM to 8PM.

**<http://stanmed.stanford.edu/2002summer/md-frontline.html>**

## **Frontline Medicine**

### **This year's Sterling award winner, F. William Blaisdell, MD, talks about trauma's past, present and future**

*Robert Tokunaga*

A diary stopped a bullet 138 years ago during the Civil War battle at Cold Harbor, Va. If it weren't for that diary, this year's J.E. Wallace Sterling Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award wouldn't be going to F. William Blaisdell, MD, class of 1952.

Blaisdell is a third-generation physician. His father Frank E. Blaisdell Jr., grandfather Frank E. Blaisdell Sr., and maternal-side uncle, Ehler Eiskamp, all graduated from Stanford School of Medicine. William Blaisdell remembers sitting on his grandfather's lap when he was 5 years old and being told the story of his great-grandfather, Solon G. Blaisdell, who was in the 12th New Hampshire Regiment, which fought at Cold Harbor in the spring of 1864.

"Son, if it weren't for this diary, you wouldn't be here," Blaisdell's grandfather said, holding up the diary that was in Solon Blaisdell's coat pocket when he was shot at Cold Harbor. The bullet pierced the diary, and although the force broke some of Solon's ribs, the bullet did not strike his heart. "If you look in the diary, you can tell the exact day that my great-grandfather was wounded because before that day the writing is missing where the bullet went through the diary," Blaisdell says. "After that date, my great-grandfather wrote around the bullet hole." ... (More online)



F.W. Blaisdell is a surgeon and Civil War buff. So it's no surprise that the surgical tools his great-grandfather used during the Civil War are among his most treasured possessions.

## One of the Civil War's Cruellest Injustices

MG Gouverneur K. Warren was a distinguished career engineering officer who was summarily relieved from command of the U.S Army V Corps on 1 April 1865 after he had won the Battle of Five Forks, a significant later engagement of the Petersburg Campaign. This was done by MG Phil Sheridan, upon authority of LTG Grant. Warren was subsequently absolved of wrong doing by a Court of Inquiry 18 years later, and six months after he had died of a "broken heart". Why the delay? Because Grant and Sheridan prevented the formation of the Court as long as they had the power to do so.

G. K. Warren was born in 1830 at Cold Spring, NY, nearly adjacent to the US Military Academy and he entered West Point at the early age of 16, graduating 2<sup>nd</sup> in the class of 1850. Commissioned a Subaltern in the Topographic Engineers, he conducted surveys in the Mississippi Delta, the Dakotas, and Nebraska. With Captain A. A. Humphreys, Warren studied possible routes for a transcontinental railroad. He was an assistant professor of mathematics at West Point when the Civil War began and left to accept a commission as LTC of the 5th New York Volunteer Infantry (Duryée's Zouaves).

He later was assigned to military engineering duties and served as the Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac under Hooker and Meade. In this assignment he distinguished himself on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg by organizing the defense of the key Union position on Little Round Top. He was then named to command the II Corps during the absence of W. S. Hancock due to wounds. Upon Hancock's return, Warren was given permanent command of the V Corps (Meade's old command), in which he continued to serve with distinction, albeit not without controversy, until after the victory at Five Forks.

After his removal, General Warren was assigned by Grant to oversee the defenses of City Point and the Petersburg and Southside Railroad, and then to command of the Department of the Mississippi. On 27 May 1865, he resigned his commission in the

volunteers and returned to duty in his regular army grade as Major, C.E. (later LTC) to which grade he had been advanced on 25 June 1864. Early assignments related to Mississippi River matters, becoming District Engineer of the Corps' new office in St. Paul, Minn. He had received successive brevets in the volunteer and regular army as major-general, of which the last were awarded on 13 March 1865. From May 1865, till his death he was employed in various parts of the country in making engineering investigations and surveys and in other works connected with his department. He was promoted to LTC on 4 March 1879. General Warren was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Philosophical Society, the American Society of Civil Engineers and to the National Academy of Sciences. He died 8 Aug 1882. Word of his exoneration was not made public until April 1883. His requests not to have a military funeral and not to be buried in uniform were fulfilled. A statue in his honor was unveiled with appropriate ceremony on Little Round Top six years later on 8 Aug 1888.

So what exactly was the problem between Warren and Sheridan? It was largely one of personalities. Gouverneur Warren was an intellectual; he was a scholar, and he was a gentleman. Phillip Sheridan, graduating in the lower-third of his USMA class of 1853 at the age of 24, after being held back one year for attacking a fellow cadet with a bayonet, was not an intellectual, he was not a scholar, and he was not a gentleman. Basically, Warren and Sheridan could not communicate with one another; and therefore they came to dislike each other. Moreover, the coarse grained Sheridan was an inherent confrontationist, possessed an exceptionally short temper and was a highly accomplished liar, particularly when it came to taking credit for what others had done, as Generals Averell and Crook could attest.

Notwithstanding, Sheridan was an excellent combat commander with a record of successes, and in any arguments with Meade and others, of which there were many, he always had Grant on his side. On paper the Cavalry Corps was a unit of the Army of the

Potomac, but in practice Sheridan reported directly to Grant. Indeed, this was an awkward arrangement for Meade. Warren also had short comings; but in his case they were largely due to his brilliance and background as an educator. He could readily perceive situations and solutions well before most of his associates, and he was a strong believer in the “critique” and “lessons learned” methods of teaching.

With regard to the latter, after every significant event Warren would review his actions and those of his subordinates with them for the purpose of improving the future performance of himself and his command. That worked well, but unfortunately he carried it two steps further; he also critiqued the actions of his peers and superiors and would send them written summaries for their information. That did not normally endear him to them, or stated another way; it didn't work worth a damn. Concerning the former, upon receiving orders, Warren would frequently raise questions to make sure he understood them, and as to the intended outcome to be expected. Although probably unintentional, Warren's questions may sometimes have sounded argumentative, and this also did not go over well with Grant, Meade and his fellow Corps Commanders. Net result was that Warren worked himself into a situation where he was highly respected, but not universally well liked.

Grant's plan for finally turning R.E. Lee out of Petersburg, or trapping the Rebel army within its lines was a simple and well-conceived continuation of his relentless leftward lunges of the past year. Phil Sheridan would lead a cavalry strike force of three divisions out beyond the Rebel right flank to Five Forks, a major road intersection about ten miles WSW of Petersburg, and about five miles west of where Lee's lines ended. From this position Sheridan could threaten the last remaining rail lines that served Petersburg & Richmond or the Rebel position itself. Sheridan was opposed by a Confederate force of about 10,000 or so cavalry and infantry, under command of George Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee.

During an encounter at Dinwiddie Court House, Sherman ran into trouble and was

threatened to be cut off from the main Union forces. He called for help, asking Grant to send the VI Corps, Horatio Wright's command, which he had teamed up with before in the very successful Shenandoah Valley Campaign. VI Corps was then located some miles to the right in the Union siege line and it would be awkward and untimely to relocate it. Grant decided to send V Corps instead since it was on the Union left flank and in a logical position to extend westward. To pacify Sheridan, Grant authorized him to remove Warren if his performance was unsatisfactory to him. That was something Sheridan was undoubtedly delighted to hear.

Grant and Meade both appeared to have understood the basic situation, that Warren was well-placed to trap Pickett's force and force its destruction. Unfortunately, the precise means by which this would be accomplished was unclear. On the evening and night of 31 March - 1 April 1865, Warren received a baffling series of orders about sending help to Sheridan, some very specific, some vaguely general, all of them acting at cross-purposes, and some arriving out of sequence. Some troops were sent directly from Warren's advanced position along the White Oak road to press up against Pickett's left rear, while others were ordered to withdraw to the Boydton Plank road for a direct march to Dinwiddie Court House and Sheridan's lines.

In a crucial but often overlooked message, Grant told Sheridan that he could expect V Corps to arrive at around midnight. While this was a reasonable estimate of the marching time, it did not take into account the time required to reassemble the Federal divisions and disengage from the enemy, nor was this estimate modified in the light of the delays in eventually deciding what Warren should do and how he should do it, nor was Grant aware that a bridge over Gravelly Run, then at flood stage, would have to be rebuilt. The V Corps consisted of three divisions commanded by Charles Griffin, R. B. Ayres, and S. W. Crawford. The first two were highly experienced soldiers, the latter lesser so.

As Union divisions marched to-and-fro that night, some contact was made with elements of Pickett's command. This alerted the

Confederate commander to the unpleasant fact that U. S. Troops were in his rear and caused him to order a night-time withdrawal. Pickett's intent was to pull back as far north as Hatcher's Run, where it is crossed by the Ford road leading from Five Forks, but a message from R. E. Lee ordering him to "hold Five Forks at all costs" and expressing "regret" that Pickett had been forced to fall back caused Pickett to take up the fateful position at Five Forks along the White Oak road. His left did not connect with the rest of the Confederate army and so the entrenchments were refused northwards about one mile east of Five Forks. (Possibly also beneficial for the Feds was the fact that Pickett and F. Lee were some 3 miles behind their lines enjoying a baked fish (shad) dinner party while the battle was incipient.)

For his part, Sheridan spent an anxious and infuriating night. The supporting infantry that was needed to strike a strong blow at the enemy did not arrive until the morning of 1 April. To compound the problem, Warren had decided that withdrawing from close contact with the Confederates along White Oak road required his personal attention, and so he was at the rear of the column of march, decidedly not where Sheridan thought he should be. Warren exacerbated this bad impression when he took an extended time after arriving before meeting with Sheridan.

The Federal attack finally stepped off at 4:15 p.m. on 1 April. While Sheridan's cavalry skirmished with Pickett's main line, Warren's infantry marched off into the gap beyond Pickett's left. Warren had deployed his men with Crawford on the right and Ayres on the left of the front line, and Griffin behind Crawford in a second line. (See Map) The first contact that V Corps had with Rebel troops was infantry and artillery fire directed at the left flank of Ayres, coming as the Union troops crossed the White Oak road. Ayres was a competent division commander, and he quickly figured out the problem and wheeled his division to the left to attack the Confederate line. However, since Crawford was still moving forward and swung wide, this opened a gap in Warren's line, which was promptly filled by

Griffin's First Division from the second line. Ranald MacKenzie's independent cavalry division joined the fray from the far right. Warren led the flanking movement and had a horse shot out from under him.

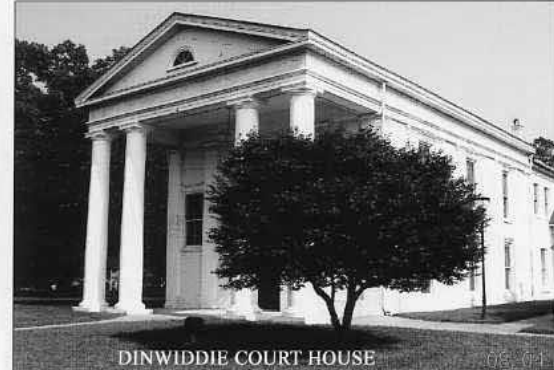
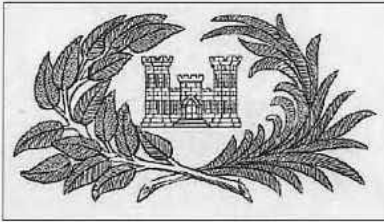
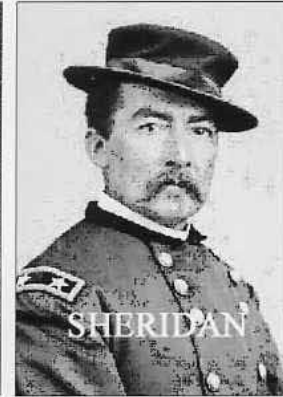
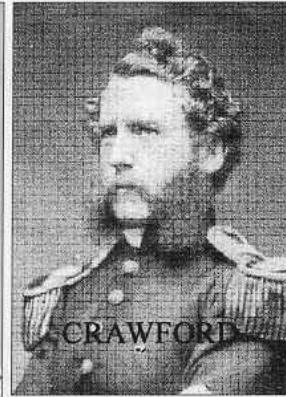
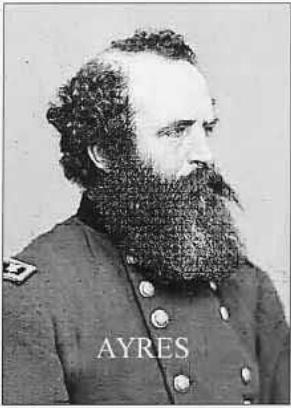
It was at about 5:00 p.m. that the weight of the Federal infantry began to quickly overwhelm Pickett's left flank. Ayres's attack overlapped the two weak Rebel brigades holding the refused line and nearby front. While this success did disorganize Ayres's troops somewhat, Griffin's division was immediately at hand to follow up the initial success. Unable to hold the onslaught, Confederate resistance collapsed. From Sheridan's perspective, however, things were going badly wrong. But while Little Phil was riding back and forth behind his immobilized cavalry line, cursing Warren and his infantry, the latter was *behind* the Rebel line rolling up their left flank and *winning* the battle. Losses at Five Forks were estimated at 830 Federals and around 3,000 Confederates, mostly captured. Among the Confederate dead was William Pegram, the youthful but veteran artilleryman, whose older brother John had been killed two months earlier.

At about 7:00 pm 1 April 1865, BG J.W. Forsyth, Sheridan's chief of staff, rode up to Warren and handed him a message from Sheridan. Warren's initial thought before he read the message was that it was probably a note of congratulations. Wrong, it said: "Maj. Gen'l Warren, Com'dg 5th A.C. is relieved from duty and will report at once for orders to Lt. Gen'l Grant, Com'dg Armies of the United States". So, with Warren out of the way, Little Phil chalks up another "Victory". What a hell of a sad way for a "Band of Brothers" to behave.

References: "The Petersburg Campaign" By J. Horn, 1993; "I Will Have Justice Done" By M. T. Kelly, 1997; "Little Phil" By E. J. Wittenberg, 2002; "Happiness Is Not My Companion" By D. M. Jordon, 2001; "The Last Citadel" By N. A. Trudeau, 1991; "Battles and Leaders" Vol.4, Part 2.

**Bob Williams: 7-25-07**

One of the Civil War's Cruellest Injustices---Graphics Page



WARREN STATUE  
LITTLE ROUND TOP

