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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 regu-
lar meeting. Items can
be given the editor by
hand, mail or e-mail.**

President's Message

George Martin really did a super job of talking about a typical regiment. When you are reading about a battle or other Civil War event, you only hear of the Generals in charge and the numbers of the corps, divisions or regiments. His talk made me think about the individual soldiers who were in a particular regiment and how their lives went.

I was very proud of how our board was able to get the word out to everyone that we had to move our meeting place on short notice. One measure of the health of an organization is how well they respond to adversity. We delivered.

I have always wondered what would have happen if South Carolina had taken its case for secession to the U. S. Supreme Court. Had the court ruled in favor of South Carolina, President Lincoln would not have had a legal basis for the war. Thus, no war. It turns out the court did rule on this matter in 1869. By now President Lincoln had appointed several new justices including a new chief justice. The case was Texas vs. White. The court ruled that the southern ordinances of secession were null and void and that the southern states had never ceased to be states in the federal union. This meant that Sen. Charles Sumner's theory of "states suicide" was wrong and Congressman Thaddeus Stevens's "conquered province" was wrong too. This meant that President Lincoln was correct. It meant that it was a rebellion. Bringing down rebellions was the duty of the executive branch of the federal government. By this time, there was little balance between the three branches of the federal government. The Supreme Court seldom took up reconstruction cases, President Johnson was pretty much isolated. The Congress ran the country.

We will meet at the Hofbrau, 2500 Watt Ave, at the corner of Watt and El Camino, this month. See page three.

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2004
COCO'S RESTAURANT, 1830 ARDEN WAY, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDENCE 27

Members – 25

Dennis Kohlmann, President	Donald Hayden	Paul Ruud
Kit Knight, Vice President	Robert Junell	Ted Swanson
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Donald Long	James Taff
Edie Keister, Secretary	Grace Long	Bob Williams
James Armstrong	Earl Martin	Susan Williams
Bob Baskerville	Virginia Martin	Maxine Wollen
Roy Bishop	Leslie Michaels	John Zasso
Fred Bohmfalk	Jim Middleton	<u>Guest-2</u>
Alan Geiken	John Nevins	George Martin
		Susan Katt

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:05. Members and guest were welcomed by our President. A count was taken of who had dinner at the restaurant. A board meeting will be held to discuss a new meeting place after the closure of Sizzler.
2. Looking for candidates for new Board members. Slave accounts of the Civil War were requested from Andrew Webb an author of many books on the War. If you have any contact Dennis, "This Day in Civil War History was read.
3. Our guest was from Sparks Nevada- George Martin. He presented "The 43rd Tennessee Regiment" of which his great-grandfather was a member. Various forms of confederate orders and paperwork were shown-request for arms, fuel, uniforms, coffins, etc. Excerpts from diaries and letters were shared, battles and news from the homefront. Photos were shown of tombstones he and others erected in 1968 where many members of the 43rd Reg. are buried. Thank you George-that was so interesting and well planned.
4. Our next speaker will be Paul Wagstaffe on Reconstruction, Wednesday, Sept. 29th.
5. The raffle was held and meeting adjourned at 8:32

Edie Keister
Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the August 24, 2004 meeting was \$1,691.84. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$39.00.

George W. Foxworth,
Treasurer

**For at least the next three months, maybe longer,
SCWRT will meet at the Hof Brau 2500 Watt Ave.
the northeast corner of El Camino and Watt Ave.**

Date	Speaker	Title
Wed 29 Sept.	Bill Webb	Mark Twain's Civil War
Tues 26 Oct.	Dennis Kohlmann	Election of 1864
Mon 6 Dec	Paul Wagstaffe	Reconstruction

Please note the change in day of the week for Oct. & Dec.

The Battle of Mobile Bay

Flag Officer, later Admiral, David Farragut's January, 1862 orders to take New Orleans specifically mentioned the capture of Mobile as a follow-up measure. Intervening events and priority shifts, however, delayed the latter event for nearly two and one-half years. While what would have been easy pickings early on, Mobile became a real pain for the Union later on.

After the fall of New Orleans, Confederate Admiral Franklin Buchanan, who had served earlier as captain of the CSS *Virginia* against the USS *Monitor* at Hampton Roads, was ordered to command the naval defenses of Mobile. Buchanan, born in 1800, was one year older than Farragut, and had an equally distinguished career in the old navy. When it appeared his home state of Maryland was likely to succeed, "Old Buck" resigned his navy commission and "went south". When Maryland did not succeed, he reconsidered and asked Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells to be reinstated. The Secretary said No! Subsequently, after Buchanan had become a premier Admiral in the Confederacy, Wells may well have wished he had reached a different decision? Neither side considered "Old Buck" to be much of a "patriot", for obvious reasons, but both sides agreed that he was a heck of a good sailor. Perhaps he would best be classified as a "mercenary"?

Two large masonry forts of the third system protected Mobile Bay. These were Fort Morgan, 45 guns with water battery, on the eastern entrance, and Fort Gaines with 26 guns three miles to the west on Dauphin Island. There was also the unfinished earthen Fort Powell between that island and the main land. Obstructions (pilings) and a minefield had further strengthened the defenses of the main entrance to the bay between the masonry forts. This left a deep-water channel opening only about 200 yards wide directly in front of Fort Morgan.

At Selma on the Alabama River, the confederates had five war ships under construction; the most important of which was the CSS *Tennessee II*, commissioned 16 Feb 64. She was a massive casemated ironclad ram 209'long, 48' beam, 14' draft, displaced 1,275 tons and heavily armored even extending below the water line. Maximum speed was only 5 knots (not exactly a "swift boat"). Crew was 133. Armament consisted of four 6.4" and two 7.0" Brooke Rifles. She was a well-built ship in all respects, but suffered from a defect that plagued many southern ironclads of being badly under powered for her size and weight. (Engines had been salvaged from a smaller wooden steamship, an expediency that the rebels frequently had to make due lack of

manufactories for mechanical equipment). Additionally, there was a design flaw that will be mentioned later. The *Tennessee*'s consorts were three rather nondescript wooden side-wheeler gunboats of 4-6 pivot guns each; the CSS *Selma*, *Gaines* and *Morgan*. During the battle the *Selma* escaped upstream and the other two were destroyed.

On 17 May 64, Buchanan succeeded in getting the *Tennessee* over the sand bar and into the lower bay. His plan was to run through the blockade doing as much damage to the wooden Union ships as possible and then capture Fort Pickens and Pensacola. But he made no further move toward offensive action. He became overawed by the extent of the ships that Farragut had mustered, and apprehensive about the seaworthiness of the *Tennessee* due to propulsion deficiencies.

At this time the West Gulf Blockading Squadron was a fleet of some 100 wooden war ships. Up to this time Farragut had been scornful of ironclads; but now, faced with the possible meeting of one, he developed a touch of "ram fever". The 14 vessels assigned to participate in the Mobile Bay attack were: the glorious old first class screw sloops, USS *Brooklyn*, *Hartford* and *Richmond*; the second class screw sloops, *Lackawanna*, *Monongahela* and *Ossipee*; the very versatile third class side-wheel double-enders, *Octorara*, *Metacomet* and *Port Royal*; the third class screw steamers; *Seminole*, *Kennebec*, *Oneida* and *Galena*; and the fourth class screw steamer *Itaska*. These wooden war ships all ran past the guns of Fort Morgan and its water battery, all were damaged, some severely, but only *Oneida* was disabled.

Farragut also requested and received four of the latest revolving-turret monitors. Two of these, USS *Manhattan* and *Tecumseh* were of the nine ship "Canonicus" Class, i.e. third generation Ericsson design, with a number of major improvements over the original "Monitor", and the second generation ten ship "Passaic" Class. These included: increased size and speed, better stability and seaworthiness, larger guns (15" Dahlgrens vs. 11"), thicker armor (11" vs. 8"), pilothouse relocated from the bow to atop the turret, armored smokestack, correction of turret overrun problems plus better sealing, and an improved ventilation system. Several vessels of this class remained in naval service until shortly after the Spanish-American War.

The other two monitor-type ironclads were the USS *Chickasaw* and *Winnebago*. These were dual turreted shallow draft river monitors of the "Milwaukee" Class. They were the products of James Eads, a prolific designer and builder, known also for his earlier "City" Class ironclad gun boats (see the USS *Cairo* next time you are in Vickburg). Eads had designed a better turret than Ericsson, but by a strange arrangement with the navy was not allowed to put his turret on a ship without it being matched by one of Ericsson's design. The Eads' turret performed smoothly and precisely. It was totally steam operated even to the run-out, elevation adjustment, and recoil take-up for its two 11" Dahlgren guns. The matched Ericsson turrets also contained two "11" Dahlgren smoothbores. Although these shallow (6') draft vessels were designed for river use; they had sufficient stability for coastal waters, but not the open ocean. Useful life of these river-monitors effectively ended with the end of the Civil War, and they were sold for scrap soon thereafter.

Farragut's order of the attack was that the four monitors would lead off, *Tecumseh* first, followed by the wooden ships lashed in pairs (smaller ships on the left) for the run past the guns of Fort Morgan. Reason for this was 1) to provide protection for the smaller ships, and 2) to provide motive power and steerage for the large vessels should they be disabled. After discussion, it was agreed that *Brooklyn* should lead after the monitors since she had a mine (torpedo)-catching device on her bow. *Hartford*, the flagship with Farragut, would follow. Next came *Richmond* followed by the smaller ships. The fort would be on the starboard (right) as the run was made and a buoy marking the beginning of the minefield on the port (left) side. The orders were to stay between those

positions; and an *unwritten* rule was when one runs past the guns of a fort to do so at a "very brisk pace". Both of these items were violated.

On 4 Aug 1864, Union Army General Gordon Granger with a 2,400-man brigade began a land attack of Fort Gaines on Dauphine Island, across the bay and out of range of Fort Morgan. Later that day with the arrival of *Tecumseh* from Pensacola, Admiral Farragut announced the naval attack would occur the next morning. Final preparations were completed, such as hanging chain armor over the starboard sides of the large ships and the placing of sandbags to protect exposed machinery. In general, ship crews went to bed early, but many remained up writing letters.

Friday, 5 August produced ideal conditions for Farragut. There was an inward flood tide that would carry damage ships past the fort into the bay, and a southwest wind that would carry smoke of the battle into the eyes of the fort's gunners. The battle fleet got underway at 5:30± a.m. and headed for the entrance to the Bay without incident or confusion. First shots were fired at 6:30±. Smoke soon obscured the view and the Admiral climbed into the main rigging for better visibility. (The ship's pilot was also in the rigging above him for the same reason, with a voice tube to deck) Seeing this *Hartford*'s captain (Drayton) sent a crewman up to secure Farragut to the rigging as a safety precaution. Events were going as planned until 7:30±, when *Brooklyn*'s captain (Alden) reported that the monitors ahead were foiling his track. What apparently had happened was that *Tecumseh*'s captain (Craven) had spotted the rebel ram *Tennessee* to his port front, and in his enthusiasm to get at her, had crossed into the minefield. Minutes later disaster occurred. The USS *Tecumseh*'s bow had struck a mine (torpedo). Travelling at top speed, she literally plowed herself under the water surface. Standing virtually on end with her propeller still turning, she sank within two minutes, taking 93 crew members with her, including Commander Craven. Miraculously, there were 21 survivors.

This tragedy understandably spooked Captain Alden who thought *Brooklyn* to also be headed into the minefield. To maneuver, he threw her engines into reverse, but forgot to tell his consort's captain of his proposed action, whose engines were still moving forward. This condition rotated both ships rapidly to the right so that their bows were pointed directly at the Fort Morgan guns, a hell of a position to be in.

Farragut, from his post in the rigging, saw all of this and immediately decided to continue the run with *Hartford* in the lead. In the confusion the gunfire from the ships had slackened and that of the fort had increased in accuracy and intensity. As *Hartford* passed *Brooklyn*, the latter reported that there were torpedoes in the ship's track. The famous slogan, "Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead" was not attributed to Farragut until fourteen years after the event, eight years after his death. It is quite probable that the Admiral did say, "Damn the Torpedoes", he was known to use such words and who wouldn't have? But there is some question as to what else he said. It may have been even stronger?

The Admiral did indeed take a risk when he led his column across the minefield. It was a bold and courageous decision to make and it paid off handsomely, as no other ship in his formation struck a mine or at least none were exploded. Had he not done so further disaster to his fleet, stalled in front of Fort Morgan, might have occurred .It should be noted that Farragut did have another basis for his decision. In the previous weeks he had had night reconnaissances made of the minefield, and had concluded that most of the torpedoes would be inactive for having been in the water too long. The one that was struck by the monitor was, of course, the tragic exception.

At 8:35 Farragut ordered *Hartford* and the other large ships to anchor in the Bay about four miles from Fort Morgan. Their consorts had been cast off to deal with the rebel gunboats. The *Tennessee* remained anchored under the protection of the guns of the fort. It was his plan for the crews to have breakfast, clean up and rest; and then he

would destroy the ram that evening with the three remaining monitors when light conditions for the fort's gunners were poor. But then it was noticed that the ram was moving and headed directly for the fleet. His order to all ships was to get under way and to "Run down the ram". This rather unstructured order instilled competition, but it also resulted in confusion. Everyone wanted his ship to be the one that sank or captured the ram, so they tended to get in each other's way!

Monongahela was first to hit the ram, but with more damage to herself than her intended victim. *Tennessee* continued directly toward the flagship, but veered off at the last moment, brushing as they passed, giving each other a broadside at point-blank range. Had they hit bow to bow both would have been sunk. Farragut, in the rigging again, it is said, was actually hanging over the deck of the ram. Next each large Union vessel took turns ramming the Rebel ram, but generally there was more damage to the rammer than the rammed. In the confusion *Lackawanna* ran into *Hartford* jarring the Admiral a bit, but annoying him more than a bit! His order to her captain was, "For God's sake get out of the way and go anchor". (This order was well documented, but rather unfair for it was later determined that both ships were at fault).

The 9" guns of the wooden ships were ineffectual against the ram's armor, even at close range, but the 11" and 15" ones of the monitors were penetrating. The coup was when *Chickasaw*, close up to the ram's stern severed her unprotected rudder chains (a design error in the ship), and brought down a section of her casement, killing 2 and wounding several other crew members, including a bad fracture of Buchanan's leg. Additionally, the smokestack had been shot down, destroying the draft to the furnaces, thus reducing the steam pressure to the engines, and filling the engine room with smoke. Although still reasonably structurally sound, the CSS *Tennessee* was helpless. The white flag went up and she surrendered at 10:00 a.m. She was later repaired in New Orleans, placed in federal service for a brief period and scrapped in 1867.

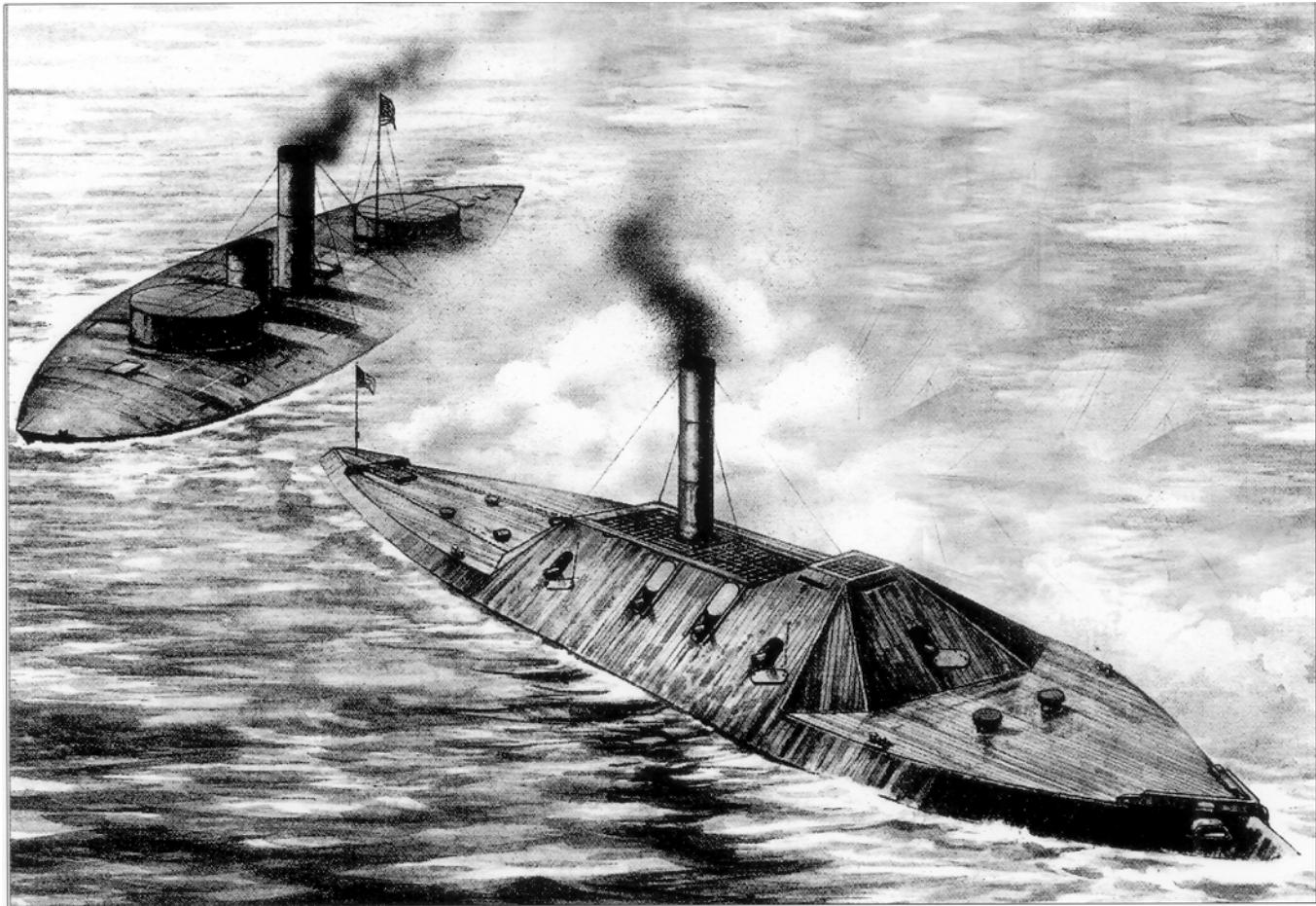
The victory was costly to the Union. The monitor USS *Tecumseh* had been sunk in 70 feet of water with 93 of her crewmembers onboard. Other losses included 52 killed and 170 wounded. Rebel losses were 12 killed and 20 wounded. The wounded on both sides, including Admiral Buchanan were placed on *Metacomet* and taken to hospitals in Pensacola. Fort Gaines surrendered to the navy of 7 August. Fort Morgan was besieged 9 August and surrendered 23 August 64. The Port of Mobile was closed to rebel activity at that time. The City of Mobile itself did not surrender until the following April 12th. There was really no great need to force it to do so sooner.

Of the 145 Union sailors who were killed, 25 of them were from the Flagship *Hartford*. A sailor who knew him well was present when Farragut viewed the lines of dead officers and men laid out on the deck. "It was the only time I ever saw the old gentleman cry, but the tears came in his eyes like a little child".

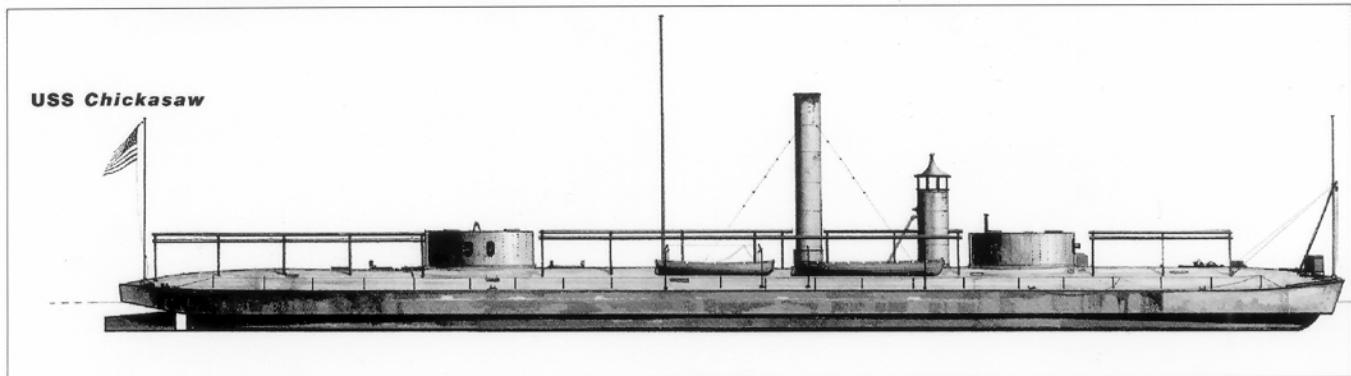
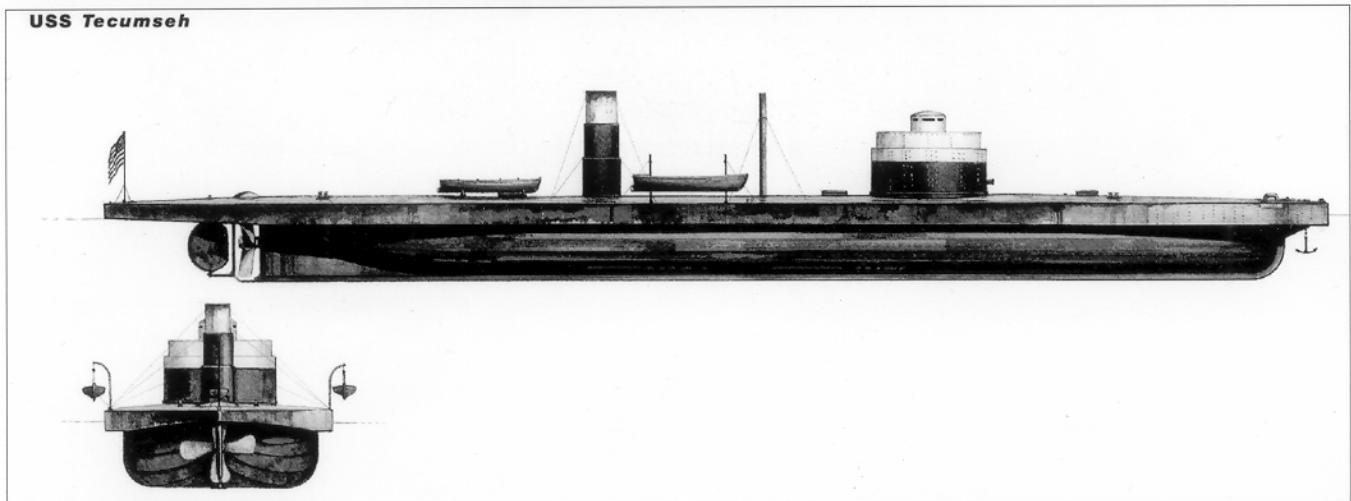
The sinking of the *Tecumseh* was the worst Union naval tragedy of the Civil War. The sunken ship is now the tomb for 93 American Patriots. As such, many believe she should remain undisturbed in perpetuity. She is also an historical treasure trove beyond measure, a 140-year-old time capsule of technology and culture. As such, many others believe she should be brought to the surface and preserved. This may be a hard decision to make. What are your views?

(References: ORN's S1 Vol. 21, S2 Vol. 1; "Battles and Leaders" Vol. 4)

Bob Williams: 9-01-04



USS Chickasaw and CSS Tennessee II



California Civil War Round Tables,

Thank you for your informative website and the service you provide for your users. We have just released a new book we think you and your users will find of particular interest.

Champion Hill: Decisive Battle for Vicksburg, by Timothy B. Smith, is the first full-length account of this remarkable battle that sealed the fate of Vicksburg. You can see more about this at
<http://www.savasbeatie.com/Champion%20Hill.html>

We can offer signed first edition copies of this new title. We can also provide you with an interview with the book's author and/or an excerpt from the book you can place on your website or in your newsletter.

You can order from us at a group discount rate or, if you like, we can collect and process the orders. As long as your users mention your organization when ordering from us, a portion of the proceeds will go to a Vicksburg-related battlefield preservation charity.

We are very flexible and willing to work closely with you to help you provide your members with something special, and help us sell quality books to those who will enjoy them most.

Let me know what else you need, and any questions you might have.

Regards,
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SALLY TOMPKINS, THE ONLY WOMAN EVER COMMISSIONED IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY

Shiloh was the cruelest battle of The War Between the States because the South won the first day and the north won on day two. Hope made a fool of reason. Shiloh gave Tennessee the honor of having the first tent-hospital ever established on an American battlefield. After the slaughter, the bodies lay in piles, some headless, others disemboweled, and many cut in half by cannon fire. Several Rebels were crushed by falling trees shattered by artillery and everywhere wounded men cried and whimpered. The air was soft, a perfect Southern spring day. That night, hogs gorged on the bodies. Methodists built the one-room log Shiloh Church and it was used in turn by both armies as headquarters. But its doors became operating tables. Its Biblical name meant "Place of Peace." Then, the armies came. Afterwards, my brother stepped one-to-another on dead men without touching the ground. When Jeff Davis made me a captain and gave me command of the hospital in Richmond, I accepted, saying, "I will not allow my name to be placed upon the pay roll of the army."

-- Kit Knight