



**Volume 49, No 12
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Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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President's Message:

Once again our program chairman has delivered a splendid discussion bringing to life Hiram Ulysses Grant, mistakenly renamed Ulysses Simpson by West Point. If not for that gaffe, we would not have heard of "Unconditional Surrender Grant" throughout history. Since he was always called Ulysses in childhood it was a good choice to leave it that way. He had such a painful existence between the wars that his ultimate success story seems wildly improbable but that adds the interest to his fascinating career. I thoroughly enjoyed Dennis Kohlmann's presentation and commend him on his ability to pack all that information in a one hour talk. Thank you Dennis for a job well done.

The holiday season has arrived and I hope everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner without paying too heavy a price in the weight gain department. On the subject of giving thanks I would like to express mine to all our members who continue to make my task a pleasure. This year we have grown by nine new members who have shown enthusiasm beyond expectation; recent additions are Nina and Wayne Henley and Don Zajic. They are most welcome. We have some members with us for thirty to forty years and many for close to twenty. Our board is without exception loyal, faithful, diligent, knowledgeable and a joy to work with. We strive to sustain interest and hope our members will help to provide input and suggestions for improvement.

Don't forget to join us December 9th for Brad Schall's discussion of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Come early for social hour and/or dinner and stay for holiday refreshments after the raffle. See you there.

Don Hayden, President:

Coming Programs 2009-2010		
Dec 9 th	Brad Schall	Lincoln-Douglas Debates
Jan. 13 th	George Beitzel	The Lost Cause
Feb.10 th	TBA	
Mar.10 th	TBA	

MINUTES
Sacramento Civil War Round Table
Wednesday, November 11, 2009
Hof Brau Restaurant, 2500 Watt Ave, Sacramento

Attendance-40

Members-36

Don Hayden, President	Mitchell Cnota	Dennis Kohlmann, PD	Richard Sickert, MAL
Silver Williams, Vice President	Fred Elenbaas	Jim Middleton, Editor	Dick Thompson
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Brad Friedman	Betty Mitchell	Robert Williams
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Joan Beitzel	Kyle Glasson	Anne Peasley	Maxine Williams
George Beitzel	Bob Hanley, MAL	Rick Peasley	Don Zajic
Roy Bishop	Scottie Hayden	Paul Ruud IPP	<u>Guest-4</u>
Fred Bohmfalk	Nina Henley	Nancy Samuelson	Jerry Cress
Rose Browne	Wayne Henley	Kris Scivoletto	Kay Scivoletto
Ardith Cnota	James Juanitas	Nicholas Scivoletto	Chris Stone
			Brent ten Pas

1. Meeting started at 7:00. In honor of Veterans Day, we started with the Pledge of Allegiance. Member Rose Browne made a large tray of cookies for us- thank you Rose! President Don Hayden spoke on the conference in Clovis- 20 members from our club attended.
2. Member Dennis Kohlman spoke on "Grant," his beginnings, his many professions, rise in the Civil War, Presidency and retirement years to his death. Thanks Dennis for a great presentation on a great man.
3. Raffle was held and meeting adjourned at 8:38.
4. Welcome new members- Nina and Wayne Henley and also Don Zajic!

Edie Keister
Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the November 11, 2009 meeting was \$2,708.39. Thanks to Susan Williams, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$72.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

CORRECTION

"There are lies, damned lies and then there are statistics"

In my November talk, I made the statement that the War with Mexico had the highest mortality rate of any war in which the U. S. was involved. Below are the statistics I used.

	NUMBER SERVING	DEATHS	RATE
Mexican War	78,718	13,283	16.9%
Civil War(Union)	2,213,363	364,511	16.4%

While reading Senator Jim Webb's book about the Scots-Irish in America, I realized the table above only uses the Union figure. The best estimate I have found is that the Confederate army had about 900,000 out of a potential of 1,100,000 soldiers. Of these about 260,000 died.

	NUMBER SERVING	DEATHS	RATE
Civil War(Union)	2,213,363	364,511	16.4%
Civil War(Confederate)	900,000	260,000	28.9%
Civil War (Combined)	3,100,000	620,000	20.0%

When the Confederate figures are added, we get a whole new picture.

Dennis Kohlmann

"Pursuit": The Chase, Capture, Persecution & Surprising Release of Confederate President Jefferson Davis By Clint Johnson

Jefferson Davis, admire or despise him, is one of the most psychologically fascinating characters in American history. Civil War historian George Rable has observed that probably no one could have been a more effective Confederate president than Davis. Gary Gallagher considers Davis an excellent Commander in Chief of the Confederate armies; yes, he selected Braxton Bragg, but he also promoted Robert E. Lee.

Clint Johnson, who has written eight lightweight mass market books on the Civil War, has turned serious with *Pursuit*. (2008). Mr. Johnson has drawn from Official Records, personal papers, diaries, and contemporary documents to produce an accurate, swift narrative that includes surprising revelations.

Although publicly in extreme denial, Davis' private letter to Bragg of March 30, 1865, several days before the fall of Richmond, confessed, "we both staked everything...and lost all." At the same time, he was urging his commanders to adopt his delusional plan to march from Virginia and North Carolina to the trans-Mississippi to unite with Confederate forces there.

According to Frederick Seward's 1916 memoir, President Lincoln said, "I should not be sorry to have them (the Confederate leaders) leave the country, but I should be for following them up pretty close, to make sure of their going." Mr. Johnson tells of Davis' strange, meandering "escape" from Richmond, accompanied by the gold in the Confederate treasury, which was slowly dissipated and never quite accounted for.

Despite Lincoln's wishes, President Johnson and Secretary of War Stanton made sure that Davis was vigorously pursued by Union cavalry, and he was caught in Georgia on May 10, 1865. He was transferred to Fort Monroe, Virginia, where he remained in prison for two years.

Mr. Johnson deftly explains the convoluted legal process that eventually freed Davis. Gerrit Smith, the ardent abolitionist and one of John Brown's "Secret Six," pledged bail for Davis. So did Horace Greeley and Cornelius Vanderbilt, who were also incensed at the government's cruel incarceration of Davis.

The government soon found that it had a tiger by the tail and couldn't let go. Their case against Davis was weak: secession didn't meet the Constitutional definition of treason. "The U.S. government was violating prisoner Davis' rights under the Constitution. That fact was growing increasingly and embarrassingly clear even to the average reader of a daily newspaper."

Though this was obviously a case for Federal court, Chief Justice Chase wanted no part of this legal albatross. Mr. Johnson tells how Chase managed to extricate the government from this morass: "By modern-day standards, Chase's actions in November 1868 would be highly unethical and perhaps illegal – if what he had done had become public." According to letters by Charles O'Conor, Davis' attorney, "Chase rigged the case...by meeting exclusively and privately with some of Davis' attorneys and telling them what defense of Davis he would accept..." Once in court, "O'Conor was essentially reading from a script provided by the Chief Justice of the United States." On December 25, 1868, the lame-duck Andrew Johnson issued a blanket amnesty that finally included Davis.

Throughout his ordeal, Davis was stubborn and stoic. He wanted a trial, which he never got, to prove that he was justified in his actions of 1861. Despite his cold, aloof public persona, Davis is shown as a devoted husband and father, who could get down on the floor to play with his young children – as long as no one was looking. Davis, the West Point graduate, the highly efficient and innovative Secretary of War (1853-57), and respected senator, ended up leading a four-year war against his country. The contradictions, both external and internal, are abundant.

Students of the Civil War will be rewarded by this well-told tale of government chicanery and Davis' commitment to a truly lost cause.

Book Review by M. Wolf.

2010 ELK GROVE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION SCHEDULE			
DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC	CONTACT #
Jan. 20 th	Bob & Jacque Bundy	Sacramento Remembers The Civil War	682-8503
Feb. 17 th	Porter Moss	Col. Grant & Mark Twain	682-5985
Mar. 17 th	Joan Beitzel	The Irish Immigrant	897-2588
Apr. 21 st	Keith Cretcher	The Great Vermont Bank Robbery	
May 19 th	Steve Von Bima	USCT	
June 16 th	Jerry Babineau	TBA	
July 21 st	Glenn Leake	THE S. S. Sultana	
Aug. 18 th	Fred Robinson	Civil War Navy Activities	
Sept. 15 th	Dr. Blaine Lamb	TBA	
Oct. 20 th	Fred Bohmfalk	General William Hardee	
Nov. 17 th	Kathleen Robinson	Cartoons of The Civil War	

*Presentation dates subject to change as 3 speakers have not provided a firm date as yet.

Notwithstanding some arguable aspects, the following article is a fitting tribute to our 16th President as the 200th anniversary year of his birth comes to a close. It is a portion of a manuscript by several authors in observance of this Bicentennial event, as noted below.

Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief¹

By Peter Cozzens²

One day toward the end of the Civil War, a high-ranking military visitor to the White House told President Lincoln that two of his fellow generals had been captured while visiting lady friends outside their camps. Along with them, several hundred horses and mules had been swept up.

Lincoln replied: “I don’t care so much for brigadiers; I can make them. But horses and mules cost money. That jest had a bitter undertone, borne of Lincoln’s long frustration with mediocre generals and the burden of having had to run the war effort almost single-handedly for three years.

The American Civil War was the first modern total war — a conflict waged not only between armies, as had long been the tradition in Western warfare, but also between societies, their economic resources, and their very ways of life.

Abraham Lincoln had entered the presidency with no military training or experience except as a militia captain in a minor Indian war three decades earlier. The standing army Lincoln inherited in March 1861 numbered just 16,000 men who were dispersed in small garrisons from the Atlantic Coast to California. Lincoln had no modern military command system on which to rely for advice or to communicate his instructions effectively to field commanders. Not only was there no general staff when war broke out a month later, but only two regular army generals had ever commanded units larger than a brigade — one was so corpulent that he could not walk across a room without exhausting himself; the other so senile that he needed help putting on his hat. Subordinate officers knew little of the higher art of war because the United States Military Academy taught engineering, mathematics, and horsemanship at the expense of strategy.

The Union army’s swift wartime expansion did not solve this leadership crisis. In less than a year, the northern army swelled to 600,000 men, and by the war’s end it had climbed to a million. Regular army captains became generals overnight. In order to unify the North and rally its large European immigrant population, Lincoln was compelled to appoint volunteer generals from civilian life. Most “earned” their stars because of their political influence or their standing among their ethnic community (Germans and Irish in particular), rather than for any military potential they might possess.

The crisis extended to the nation’s political leadership. Lincoln lacked the support of a united cabinet. While later presidents possessed the luxury of appointing talented but usually pliant subordinates, then-existing custom and political reality required that Lincoln fill his cabinet with willful politicians of national prominence. Among them were Secretary of State William H. Seward, whom Lincoln had defeated for the Republican presidential nomination in a stunning upset; Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, a founder of the Republican Party

who fancied himself a future president; and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, a Democrat who had bested Lincoln in a major court case when both were lawyers. In the early months of the conflict, these men all considered themselves intellectually superior to Lincoln, equally if not more capable of steering the ship of state through the treacherous waters of civil war.

A Challenge from the Incompetents

Despite these liabilities, by the power of his mind and force of character Lincoln became a brilliant strategist, with a better grasp on the nature and objectives of civil war than any of the long line of generals who commanded Union armies, Ulysses S. Grant not excepted. From the start, Lincoln recognized the value of the North's overwhelming naval power, and he employed it relentlessly to choke the Confederacy, closing southern ports to prevent the export of its only commodity of international value — cotton — and to prevent the import of badly needed arms and other war supplies from Europe. He also understood the importance of seizing the Mississippi River to cut the South in half, as well as the need to maintain pressure on the whole strategic line of the Confederacy, something his generals proved singularly incapable of doing until General Grant assumed the role of general-in-chief in February 1864. To Lincoln's constant frustration, his generals consistently failed fully to press the North's large advantages in manpower and industrial capacity.

Lincoln knew there could be no half measures, that the issues of national union and emancipation could be settled only in such a way that they could never be reopened. This required both the total destruction of the Confederate army and of the capacity of the South to wage war.

As the war dragged on, Lincoln rid the army of scores of incompetent political generals at great risk to his reelection. He asked only for commanders who would fight, and he willingly discarded his strategic judgments when he thought he had found an able general. But all too often he instead encountered inaction, delay, and excuses. He relieved the most popular commander of the first year and a half of the war — Major General George B. McClellan, a man fiercely idolized by his men — because he suffered from what Lincoln termed “the slows.” He showed similar, and proper, impatience with generals who were too timid to follow up battlefield victories decisively. Unfortunately for the North, every army commander in the war’s first three years displayed this shortcoming.

Lincoln also faced an internal challenge to his commander-in-chief authority. Today, of course, the principle of absolute civilian control over the military is universally accepted. It had not been when Lincoln took office. Since the nation’s founding it had been acceptable for army commanders to pass judgment on political questions — a brand of insubordination that was comparatively harmless during the war with Mexico, but that could threaten the fabric of the nation in a struggle for national survival as did the Civil War.

When Lincoln relieved McClellan of command, a number of McClellan’s subordinate generals in the Army of the Potomac discussed abandoning the battle against the Confederacy and instead marching on Washington to unseat the president. As late as April 1863, Major General Joseph Hooker, the commander of that critical army, advocated replacing the presidency with a military dictatorship. Lincoln responded in a measured but firm manner. After he was removed from command for losing the battle of Chancellorsville against an enemy whom he had outnumbered more than two to one, Hooker recognized how restrained had been the president’s reaction to Hooker’s political blustering and how prudent had been Lincoln’s counsel in

military matters. Tearfully he told fellow generals that Lincoln had treated him as a caring father would an errant son.

A Shift in Sentiment

By the time of the 1864 presidential campaign, the common soldiers also had come to recognize the greatness of Lincoln's strategic leadership. Their votes went overwhelmingly to Lincoln, ensuring his victory over George B. McClellan. After being sacked by Lincoln, the former general had emerged as the president's Democratic opponent and, as a proponent of sectional reconciliation, the most prominent challenger to his political vision.

The significance of this shift in military sentiment from McClellan to Lincoln cannot be overstated. Lincoln had at last found his fighting general, Ulysses S. Grant, a rough-hewn commander who shared his chief's determination to press the North's real advantages in manpower and resources. The Army of the Potomac had suffered nearly 55,000 casualties during the first month and a half of Grant's tenure as general-in-chief. Decisive victories in the Shenandoah Valley and the capture of Atlanta, Georgia, fruits of Lincoln's vision of relentless pressure on the entire military front, offered hope for ultimate victory.

But the South showed no signs of surrendering. Grant's superior generalship and Lincoln's policy of simultaneous offensives were being sorely tested in a bitter and stalemated siege of General Robert E. Lee's army at Petersburg, Virginia. In the Western Theater (as the area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River was called), a weakened but still formidable Confederate army roamed, and west of the Mississippi, a large and virtually untested enemy force held Louisiana and Texas. Lincoln's 1864 electoral triumph thus represented a national consensus to wage the war to its finish.

Politically secure as a second-term president, Lincoln persisted with the same firmness of purpose he had shown during an unpopular first term. His appointment of the dependable Grant as general-in-chief had eased much of the daily pressure on Lincoln, who found he could safely yield to Grant the day-to-day management of the war. But even Grant faced hard questions from Lincoln when the president doubted the wisdom of his decisions.

Road to Reunion

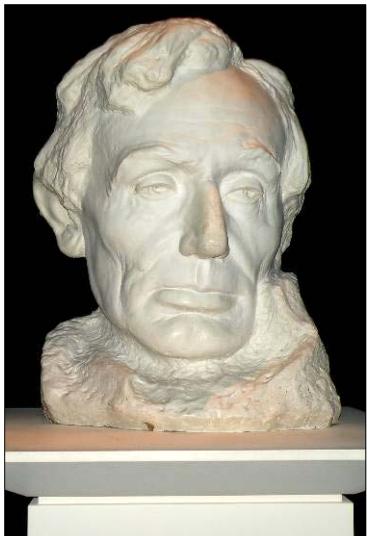
In the first week of April 1865, final victory was at last in sight. After smashing much of what remained of Lee's once seemingly unbeatable Army of Northern Virginia, Major General Philip H. Sheridan telegraphed Grant: "If the thing be pressed I think Lee will surrender."

Grant passed Sheridan's dispatch to Lincoln. The president told Grant: "Let the thing be pressed." It was Lincoln's last important order, and like most of his orders a good one. Three days after writing it, Lincoln was dead, the victim of an assassin's bullet. The United States had lost its greatest war president and a great natural strategist. But more than any other factor, his strategic vision and firmness of purpose had won the Civil War and started the nation on the road to reunion.

¹*This article is excerpted from Abraham Lincoln: A Legacy of Freedom published by the Bureau of International Information Programs.*

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/books/lincoln.pdf>

²Peter Cozzens is a foreign service officer and a leading military historian. He is the award-winning author of 16 books on the U.S. Civil War and the Indian Wars of the American West



*"With malice toward none; with charity
for all; with firmness in the right, as
God gives us to see the right, let us
strive on to finish the work we are in;
to bind up the nation's wounds; to care
for him who shall have borne the battle,
and for his widow, and his orphan...
In the pursuit of a more perfect and equal union"
4 March 1865*

Submitted by RAW: 11-10-2009