



Battle Cry

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

Here we are wrapping up another year of our round-table. It actually takes more effort to keep us running efficiently than you might guess. An example is our newsletter which Brent ten Pas, our Editor does for us each month. He makes sure we don't leave anything out, and queries us from time to time.

Dennis Kohlmann has been our Program Director for longer than I am aware, and has done a wonderful job. His present term in office expires with the end of this year and Dennis wants to retire. We will have a vote for his replacement at our December meeting. Our candidate as his replacement is Silver Williams who was our Vice President in 2010 – 2011.

I am of the opinion that our Treasurer George (recently married) Foxworth has one of the greatest impacts on our club, in that he seems to do more than the traditional Treasurer. He has contacts with other organizations where he gets information that helps us. George helps keep us organized.

Our immediate Past President is Don Hayden. Don has done a wonderful job for lots of years, and in fact was something of a mentor for me. He was President the entire time I have been a member of this club. He is clearly my fallback guy should I need anything.

Our two Members at Large are Nina and Wayne Henley who have helped us in recent years with our efforts at Gibson ranch among other things and continue to help us with their feedback on ideas for future tasks.

We also have a web-master who takes care of all of our on-line needs, and not a month goes by that we don't have something that we need her help with. Kim maintains our web-site which includes making changes to our speaker schedule when she is notified by our Program Director.

Maxine Wollen is our Secretary taking care of all required tasks for the club including interfacing with our Treasurer. Maxine replaced our former Secretary who passed away earlier this year.

I believe everyone is aware that the November 2013 West Coast Conference is being hosted by the San Joaquin Valley CWRT located in Clovis. We can expect more information from them as 2013 unfolds.

Bob Hanley, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, November 14, 2012
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 34

MEMBERS - 29

Jim Armstrong
Roy Bishop
Ardith Cnota
Mitch Cnota
James Cress
Jerry Cress
George Foxworth, Treasurer
Monica Foxworth
Bob Hanley, President
Scottie Hayden
Don Hayden, IPP
Nina Henley, MAL
Wayne Henley, MAL
Dennis Kohlman, PD

Lowell Lardie
Ken Lentz
Mary Lou Lentz
Grace Long
Anne Peasley, VP
Rick Peasley
Ron Perisho
John Rice
Paul Ruud
Patty Ruud
Nancy Samuelson
Richard Sickert
Silver Williams
Maxine Wollen, SEC

John Zasso
GUESTS - 5
Wade Chandler
John Hawdy
Robert Schroeder
Ray Valdez
Wayne Wash

1. The meeting was called to order by Don Hayden at 7:00 pm.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Don Hayden.
3. Don introduced guests.
4. A wedding cake was presented by Silver Williams to honor the new bride & groom, Mr. and Mrs. George Foxworth.
5. Anne Peasley was the speaker, giving an interesting talk on General Longstreet. Afterward, Don gave her a bottle of wine as thanks for being the speaker.
6. The December speakers will be in the form of a play acted by Nina & Wayne Henley.
7. John Zasso conducted the raffle.
8. Board meeting was conducted immediately afterwards.

General Longstreet was born in South Carolina while his mother was there on a visit. He went by the nickname of Peter and learned to be very resolute at a young age. He lived in his uncle's house, who was a strong States Rights person, which was to have a significant impact on young Longstreet. He never knew of any other theory of government. He attended West Point and graduated in the bottom third of his class. Grant became his best friend while there. Longstreet had a talent for spotting talent and put together a great staff, who served him well in the War. He and Lee got along very well, becoming close friends. He was innovative in planning battles. Lee and Longstreet never saw each other again after Appomattox, but kept in correspondence. After the War, Longstreet became a Republican, faced the future, and went along with the new government. By doing so, he was considered a traitor to the south, and became a scapegoat. Jubal Early wrote his memoirs, and basically re-wrote history, putting Longstreet in a bad light.

Board Meeting

Clovis RT is planning on hosting the next Conference, by having a 4 day cruise, from San Pedro with one stop in Ensenada. The cost will be \$400 double occ, plus \$100 for other costs. To reserve a slot, contact Clovis right away at 559-686-1631. Clovis will have a bus for the ride south. We need to get an idea of the # of people who will attend.

Another topic was that Dennis wants to retire as Program Director. Silver Williams is a possible replacement.

There will be no Board breakfast in Nov & Dec; will be resumed in January.

Maxine Wollen, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the November 14, 2012 meeting was \$3,050.14. Thanks to John Zasso, members and guests, the raffle brought in \$71.00. George W. Foxworth, Treasurer



BOOK REVIEW



Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!

by George C. Rable.

Illustrated, maps, order of battle, notes, bibliography, index, 671 pp., 2002. The University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2288, \$45 plus shipping.

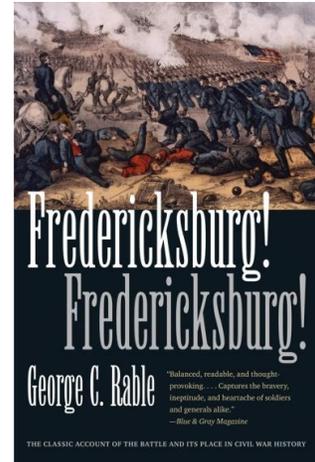
For the North, the word “Fredericksburg” symbolized the darkest period of the war. It demonstrated the stupidity of blindly throwing troops forward against strongly entrenched defenders, something apparently forgotten a year and a half later when the same thing occurred at Cold Harbor.

It also illustrated the effect of political pressure exerted on the military high command by the Lincoln administration as well as the psychological state of mind of Ambrose Burnside when faced with doing what the government expected of him despite his reticence in assuming command in the first place. His dogmatic response in continually attacking due to this pressure and despite the horrendous slaughter of his army made him a pathetic figure in history.

While the Confederacy gained a defensive victory, it did not profit from it strategically or diplomatically. The Army of the Potomac was not destroyed and foreign intervention did not occur. So the battle really contributed little for the South except the satisfaction of inflicting huge casualties upon the enemy as well as casting deep gloom for its survivors and the Northern population in general. Given the North’s resilience, the fruits of such a victory were short-lived.

These themes are already well-known by most Civil War readers and are treated in George C. Rable’s book as well. But this offering is different in the sense that it gives no opinions of its own but simply tells the story. The story is not just about the battle though, because it also involves a complete discussion of the social, political and military conditions on both sides existing in the fall of 1862 to set the stage for the engagement.

Then it concludes by showing how those conditions were changed in a profound way as a result of the fighting. Rable not only relates its debilitating effects on the morale of the Northern civilian population and its soldiers, but also recounts the tremendous physical destruction of the city for its inhabitants in the midst of victory.



Perhaps the most poignant discussion involves the soldier’s everyday existence in freezing winter camps while simultaneously witnessing death and physical suffering in the aftermath of the campaign.

Rable’s portrayal of the battle is skillfully done. A large-scale perspective of the fighting is intermeshed with individual soldiers’ reactions. He covers the artillery bombardment preceding it, the crossing of the river via pontoons, the momentary success of Federal forces on their left when they breached a gap in the Confederate line and, of course, the failed assaults at Marye’s Heights. The pace of the story is fast here, much like the battle itself.

The political and social ramifications of this one battle were far-reaching for both sides, but more so for the North where despair set in once the casualty lists were made known.

Burnside’s infamous “Mud March” thereafter not only failed in its ostensible military purpose and exacerbated this despair, but also sealed his fate as an incompetent commanding general in the eyes of both the soldier in the ranks as well as with the Lincoln administration. The latter readily accepted his resignation once it became apparent that he lacked the confidence of the men, his subordinates, and also the civilian population.

Although Rable offers no apology for Burnside, the reader gets the impression that he was a tired man, frustrated by the logistical failure to have pontoons available to cross the river before Lee solidified his defenses.

The pettiness and political machinations of some of his subordinates, including that of Gen. Joseph Hooker, did nothing to make Burnside's efforts easier. This, however, was no excuse for Burnside to succumb to the impatience of the North in capturing Richmond when conditions were no longer propitious.

Rable liberally sprinkles the story with references to individual soldiers' experiences on both sides which make the book a fast moving and interesting account for the reader rather than a mere recitation of dry facts. There are some areas where Rable adds more than necessary inasmuch as he has already made his point quite convincingly. But this carping aside, there is no question that he has researched the topic extensively and has developed it well.

The incorporation of the soldier's story through skillful paraphrasing and pithy quotations enables the reader to not only realize what occurred, but also experience the emotions of the movement. This really sets Rable's book apart from others which, in themselves, might be even more detailed in a tactical sense, but not as readable stylistically.

Approximately two-thirds of the book is the actual text with the balance being detailed notes, order of battle, bibliography and index. Maps are clear and drawn to a regimental level, although I would have liked to see more of them. All in all, this is a book that should satisfy all readers of Civil War literature, having just enough detail for the Fredericksburg buff and yet being one of the most interesting renditions of any battle for those who ordinarily find campaign studies tedious.

Its strength lies in its style and the placement of the battle into the context of what was happening politically, socially and militarily in the fall and winter of 1862. In short, it is a worthwhile contribution that should not be ignored.

Frank Piatek

Frank Piatek graduated from Geneva College with a B.A. in history. He received his J.D. from Duquesne University in 1972. He is a member of several reenactment groups and past president of the Mahoning Valley Civil War Round Table.



"Murderous Butchery":
Virginia, December 1862

*Samuel W. Fiske to the
Springfield Republican*

Lieutenant Fiske, with typhoid and dysentery, could only watch as his regiment, the 14th Connecticut, lost 120 men in the assault on Marye's Heights behind Fredericksburg. The Army of the Potomac lost more than 12,600 men killed, wounded, or missing in the battle, while Confederate casualties totaled about 5,300.

Fredericksburg
December 15

Oh, Republican! My heart is sick and sad. Blood and wounds and death are before my eyes; of those who are my friends, comrades, brothers; of those who have marched into the very mouth of destruction as coolly and cheerfully as to any ordinary duty. Another tremendous, terrible, murderous butchery of brave men has made Saturday the 13th of December, a memorable day in the annals of this war.

On Friday, Fredericksburg was taken with comparatively little trouble and loss. On Saturday, the grand army corps of Sumner marched up against the heights back of the city, where the enemy lay behind strong fortifications, all bristling with cannon and protected by rifle pits; while our men must cross a wide space of clear, open ground, and then a canal whose every crossing was swept by artillery so perfectly trained beforehand this grand semi-circle of death our divisions marched with rapid and unflinching step. French's division (to which we belong) behaved splendidly, and the others no less so

if we may judge by the losses. Of whole companies and regiments not a man flinched. The grape and canister tore through their ranks, the fearful volleys of musketry from invisible foes decimated their numbers every few moments; the conflict was hopeless, they could inflict scarcely any damage upon the foe; our artillery couldn't cover them, for they would do more damage to friend than enemy; yet our gallant fellows pressed on, determined to scale those breastworks and take the position of the rebels. But there were none left to do that work. A little handful of a great division approached, and even in a few instances began to climb the works, but only to leave their mangled bodies on the bloody field; a few torn and blackened remnants were mainly brought off, though hundreds were killed in the benevolent task. The city is filled with the pieces of brave men who went whole into the conflict. Every basement and floor is covered with blood. Limbs in many houses lie in heaps, and surgeons are exhausted with their trying labors.

But I will not sicken you with a recital of the horrors before us. Why our noble fellows were pushed on into such a hopeless and desperate undertaking I am not military man enough to say. Or why the grand division of Hooker were marching and countermarching all through the day on the other side of the river, and didn't cross over till just at night to help in the bloody business, if it must be undertaken, I do not know either. Indeed I don't know anything hardly save that I am sick at such a destruction of noble human lives, necessary or unnecessary, useful or useless.

Personally, dear Republican, I was not much in the fight except to be under the shell fire a considerable part of the day in my anxiety to reach my regiment, and failing that to get as near as possible, as a spectator of the terrible scene. Sick for two weeks of a fever and diarrhoea, I heard the heavy firing of Thursday from a hospital ten miles distant, got permission from the surgeon in charge to mount a U.S. wagon laden with medical stores and start for the regiment. But the fearful roads of corduroy under a foot or two of mud, and the feeble state of the teams living for weeks on half forage, hindered us, and prevented your correspondent from reaching his post till the day after the battle. And doubtless the sight of the poor remnants of his regiment -- one hundred men only reported for duty -- and of his brigade, not enough to make half a regiment -- and then not having

been in the scene where the change was effected, have come over his feelings more powerfully than would otherwise have been the case, and given a sad tinge to what he ever wishes to write cheerfully. For God is over all, and even this thing is right, and shall come out in a result of good, sometime. God grant that we may see it.

December 17: Night before last, quietly and without disturbance from the enemy, we evacuated Fredericksburg, and marched back to our respective old camps on this side of the Rappahannock. In the darkness and through the deep mud the tired soldiers plodded wearily on their way, and then on their arrival were obliged to lie down on the ground and make the best of a rainy winter's night, before they could proceed to arrange themselves for any comfortable quarters. Let us hope that the shattered divisions that bore the brunt of the fatal fight behind Fredericksburg may be left to a little rest before meeting any more of the horrors of a winter's campaign in this terrible country. Oh for a month of that beautiful weather that we wasted in the autumn. We hear rumors of the capture of Fort Darling and of Richmond, but do not credit it. If it only could be so, and that our desperate attack at Fredericksburg could have the excuse of being a part of the preconcerted plan to occupy the attention of the enemy and keep his forces here, it would much relieve many sore and discouraged hearts.

We brought off all our wounded from the city, and have left little that is valuable on the other side, save our unburied heroes on the field of battle. The pontoon bridges too are saved and ready to throw across again, and our heavily artillery command the passage of the river at any time, I suppose.

DUNNE BROWNE
December 15 and 17, 1862

(Source: The Civil War: The Second Year Told By Those Who Lived It. Stephen W. Sears, editor.



NEW RELEASE

Simply Murder: The Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 2012, Chris Mackowski and Kristopher White, 171 illustrations, 168 pp., \$12.95.

"They melted like snow on the ground, one officer said—wave after wave of Federal soldiers charging uphill across an open muddy plain. Confederates, fortified behind a stone wall along a sunken road, poured a hail of lead into them as they charged . . . and faltered . . . and died. "I had never before seen fighting like that, nothing approaching it in terrible uproar and destruction," said one eyewitness to the slaughter. "It is only murder now."

The battle of Fredericksburg is usually remembered as the most lopsided Union defeat of the Civil War. It is sometimes called "Burnside's folly," after Union commander Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside who led the Army of the Potomac to ruin along the banks of the Rappahannock River. But the battle remains one of the most misunderstood and misremembered engagements of the war. Burnside started with a well-conceived plan and had every reason to expect victory. How did it go so terribly wrong? Authors Chris Mackowski and Kristopher D. White have worked for years along Fredericksburg's Sunken Road and Stone Wall, and they've escorted thousands of visitors across the battlefield.

Simply Murder not only recounts Fredericksburg's tragic story of slaughter, but includes invaluable information about the battlefield itself and the insights they've learned from years of walking the ground. *Simply Murder* can be enjoyed in the comfort of one's living room or as a guide on the battlefield itself. It is also the first release in the new "Emerging Civil War Series," which offers compelling and easy-to-read overviews of some of the Civil War's most important battles and issues.

Text Source: Savas-Beatie Publishing



DID YOU KNOW?

Galusha Pennypacker was the youngest general in the Civil War. At the age of 16 he enlisted as a quartermaster sergeant in the 9th Pennsylvania infantry Regiment. In October 1861, he was appointed a major in the 9th Pennsylvania, for which he had helped recruit a company of men. Pennypacker's greatest moment of the war came at the Second Battle of Fort Fisher, January 15, 1865, where he received what many thought a fatal wound. General Terry promised he would receive a brevet promotion for his conduct that day, and called him "the real hero of Fort Fisher." Pennypacker much later was awarded the medal of Honor, with a citation reading: "He gallantly led the charge over a traverse and planted the colors of one of his regiments thereon; was severely wounded." He survived his wounds after 10 months in the hospital and on February 18, 1865, received a full promotion to a brigadier general of volunteers at age 20, making him the youngest officer to hold the rank of general to this day in the United States Army. Pennypacker stayed in the Army after the Civil War, serving on the frontier as Colonel of the 34th U.S. Infantry, transferring 1869 to the 16th U.S. Infantry, which he commanded until his retirement in July 1883.



Galusha Pennypacker

