



The Stone Wall

Bull Run Civil War Round Table



November 1993 Newsletter

TECHNOLOGY FOR TRAGEDY

The November 11, 1993 meeting features BRCWRT's own Allan W. Howey who will present to us the topic of Civil War weaponry and the effects of this advancement in technology on wartime tactics and medical care. Lieutenant Colonel Howey, a native of Detroit, is a career Air Force officer with nearly 3200 flying hours logged as a command pilot. He graduated from the USAF Academy in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in Western European and military history and earned a master's degree in American and military history at Indiana University. He later became a distinguished graduate of the Squadron Officer School at Maxwell AFB in Alabama.

Colonel Howey has seen much of the world, including stints in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. He now lives in Springfield, Virginia and is assigned to the Center for Air Force History at the Pentagon. Colonel Howey is an experienced and an award-winning instructor of diplomatic and military history. He has been an enthusiastic Civil War historian since the age of twelve. He looks forward to sharing his knowledge by speaking to us about the devastating results that occur when antiquated tactics clash with ahead-of-its-time technology.

HEAR IT ALL AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING!!!

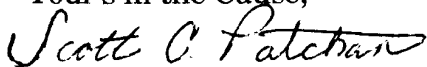
From the Lieutenant-Colonel's Desk....

As the second in command, I wanted to take some time to let you know about some of the things going on behind the scenes here at BRCWRT. First of all, it was brought to my attention that we have our own unsung hero. Some of you will recall that for most of last year our Round Table lacked a secretary. We assumed that Armando Mancini was picking up the slack all by himself. Well, once again the old saying that behind every man is a woman has proven to be true. Mrs. Ann Marie Mancini spent countless hours typing address labels and preparing the newsletter for mailing on a monthly basis. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude and appreciation for a job well done. Secondly, I hope that you are enjoying the new features and format of *The Stonewall*. I must thank Adjutant Gary Ecelbarger for his enthusiasm and hard work on the newsletter. Gary and I put the monthly newsletter together as a team and are always looking for contributing writers. If any of you want to write an article for a newsletter, please send it in. On the program front, things are looking good for next year. I have already spoken with several potential speakers, and it looks like we will once again be presented with a wide variety of topics from the Battle of Bristoe Station to the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. One schedule change to note is that Alan Nolan will not be speaking to our group this coming April. In his stead, I hope to get a National Park Service historian from Ford's Theater to speak on the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

In October, a seventy plus person audience heard author Bob O'Neill tell us about the cavalry battles at Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville which precluded the Gettysburg Campaign. Mr. O'Neill's talk was well received and many members are looking for his coming book on the topic to be published in H. E. Howard's Virginia Battles and Leaders Series. Additionally, Bill Miller, founder of BRCWRT, surprised my men and myself with a plaque for my company's victory in this past summer's Civil War Skirmish. I would like to thank my men for a job well done. Privates Ecelbarger, Kevin Leahy and Chuck Norville all shot straight and hit their targets on that hot August night. All of us would like to thank the membership for the plaque and Captain Swanson for a well fought battle. Some new troops may have a chance at it next year as uncertain plans by company members may prevent the same team from defending. But I shall return, leading draftees and substitutes if the need should arise. It was a very fun night for both the audience and participants. Bill Miller has provided us with an excellent recap of the night's events further along in this issue of the Stonewall.

Finally, I would like to encourage anyone who wants to increase their involvement in Round Table activities to step forward. BRCWRT has never turned down any offers of help, nor do we anticipate a labor surplus in the near future. Please contact me, and I will be happy to put you in touch with the person in charge of your area of interest. I can be reached at 324-3167 during the day and am always looking forward to getting to know the members of our Round Table.

Your's in the Cause,



Scott C. Patchan, Vice-President-BRCWRT

Centreville Rifles Victorious in First Annual Intramural Skirmish submitted by "Handspike"

The Centreville Rifles laid down a steady and continuous fire of correct answers in defeating the Richmond Beau-A-Guards 1,310 to 860 in the "Team Jeopardy" Intramural Skirmish held at the August meeting. The victors displayed an impressive knowledge and a relentless firepower, taking the lead for good on just the fourth question of the contest.

The two teams of four players each squared off in a test of knowledge and reflexes and attempted to answer 71 questions on the Civil War. The categories included "Topography," "The Navies," "Shiloh," "The Tools of War," "Sharpsburg," "Regiments and Brigades," and the two battles of Manassas. Moderator Tom Devaney read each question and the teams signaled their willingness to answer by pushing a button that lighted a red or blue light. The first team to signal earned the right to fire off its answer to the question. A correct answer earned points, an incorrect answer cost points. The combatants played two rounds of 35 questions each and one final round of one question in which they could, if they wished, go for broke and wager all of their points. The affair went smoothly and was over in about an hour.

The Richmond Beau-A-Guards, captained by Ralph Swanson, drew first blood, earning ten points on a question about First Manassas. After two questions that stumped both teams, The Centreville Rifles scored on a 40-pointer and seemed to hit its stride soon thereafter. Captain Scott Patchan of the Centrevillians later admitted that he and his men were nervous until the firing started, but he seemed to have his men well in hand throughout. Patchan and his team of Gary Ecelbarger, Kevin Leahy and Chuck Norville answered 40 questions correctly and misfired on just 9. The Richmonders answered 21 correctly and 9 incorrectly. When the firing died down at the end of Round 1, the score stood 590 to 30 in favor of The Centreville Rifles.

Point values were doubled in Round 2, so, despite the lopsided score, the contest was far from decided. Captain Swanson and his squad gamely increased their output and scored a very solid 400 points in the Round, and did so without the benefit of a Daily Double. The two Daily Doubles in each round permitted the teams to wager large amounts of points on their ability to answer correctly. Such an opportunity might have put the Richmonders right back in the thick of things, but luck was against them. Patchan's riflemen, firing from behind a breastwork draped with the National Colors, located three of the four Daily Doubles and scored on two of them. Captain Swanson's men, Jay Corbalis, Justin "The Swamp Fox" Isaac and Bob Kindergan, fought above the Confederate Battleflag and hit just one Daily Double, and that in Round 1. Neither team could identify a portrait of Admiral Raphael Semmes, commander of the *C.S.S. Alabama*, though Private Norville, amid much laughter, did astutely note the admiral's previously unnoticed but nevertheless uncanny resemblance to Rhett Butler.

The Centreville Rifles sustained their rapid fire in Round 2, and speed seemed to be the telling factor. Patchan et al got first shot at 21 of the 35 questions. On several questions, Swanson's team signaled in just a fraction of a second after Patchan's. Swanson and his men showed themselves to be

especially strong on "Sharpsburg" (3 of 5 correct answers), dates (4 of 5) and "Forts" (3 of 5). Patchan's "Rifles" provided two impressive highlights. The first was going 5 for 5 in a very tough category of "Regiments and Brigades," in which the team named three of the five regiments in the Louisiana Tiger Brigade and, on another question, Captain Patchan quickly rattled off all five regiments in the "Iron Brigade," evoking "oohs" and "ahhs" from the audience. The second impressive highlight was provided by Private Leahy, who confidently identified the officer who was wounded five times at Sharpsburg's "Bloody Lane" as "John B. *Gibbon*." The knowledgeable audience howled at his misstatement, and he clearly knew he had misspoken as soon as the fateful word was out -- but it was *too late*. Captain Swanson capitalized and provided the correct answer -- "John B. *Gordon*" If only Mr. Leahy's team had lost, we'd have been able to gleefully gibe him about his gaff for ever more, but now we shall only be able to tease him about a small, insignificant slip of the tongue. Nevertheless, we will get whatever mileage out of it we can.

At the end of Round 2, the score stood 1,210 to 430 in favor of the Centrevillians, and the contest was over unless Patchan & co. did something foolish. They did not. A very, *very* conservative bet assured them of victory. The category was "Seniority of Generals" and the question was "Who was the Confederacy's highest-ranking general." Both teams correctly answered Samuel Cooper, but Captain Swanson's team provided a brave and inspiring finish. Ralph's courageous all-or-nothing bid doubled his team's score and earned him and his men the respect and even affection of the audience. The Richmonders never gave up and went down full of fight with all guns blazing. Well done to the victors and the vanquished.

It was a fun event for the organizers, participants and spectators alike, and those of you not among the 67 folks in attendance missed out on a grand time. The contestants and the audience agreed wholeheartedly that the event was a success and that we should do it again (best of all, no one was electrocuted by the homemade button-and-light rig). The proposal that we field a team and challenge other Round Tables in the area also met with universal enthusiasm, because, given our pool of talent, quite frankly, no one can see how we can be beaten (please pardon the bravado, but we're trying to rile up potential competition). Organizers are even now putting the challenge process in motion, so stay tuned for details. The Centreville Rifles received their trophy at the October meeting.

Trivia

If you are the first person to answer the three following questions correctly you will win five book raffle tickets.

1. The brother of this Confederate Major-General was killed in the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain while serving as a Captain in a Kentucky Cavalry unit. Who is this Major-General?

2. Who was the first General lost by capture after Robert E. Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia?

3. What Union General is the only man in U. S. history to represent 3 different states in the U. S. Senate?

Send answers to: P. O. Box 951, Manassas, VA 22111

"PERMISSION TO SPEAK FREELY"

THE MOST DECISIVE DAY OF THE CIVIL WAR
by Scott C. Patchan

Webster's Dictionary defines decisive as having the power or quality of deciding. It lists "conclusive" as a synonym. Neither September 17, 1862 or July 3, 1863 had decisive qualities in terms of bringing about the final outcome of the war. July 3, 1863 is easily refutable as the most decisive day of the war. The most decisive day at Gettysburg was July 2, when Lee hit the Union lines hard on both flanks and in the front but failed to achieve victory. One Union officer commented on the night of July 2, that they've hammered us into a position they can't knock us out of. H. Phanz makes it vividly clear in his book on the second day at Gettysburg that July 2 is the decisive day of that battle. As for Vicksburg falling on July 3, Grant's decisive maneuvering and fighting on land and water in May of '63 sealed the fate of Vicksburg. All one has to do is to read Ed Bearss's 3 volume study on Vicksburg to realize this. If September 17, 1862 was the most decisive day of the war why did the war not end in the spring of 1863 instead of '65? A lack of European recognition did not preclude a Confederate victory. Although Europe did not recognize the Confederacy, Europe certainly continued to provide the South with the arms and ammunition throughout the war. The reason they are not decisive is that they ignore a major component of the war, the political side.

In a civil war, politics played a heightened role, especially in a Democracy such as the United States where the rulers only have the authority to wage war against a rebelling section of the nation as long as the people of the United States were willing to grant their leaders that power. By the summer of 1864, the northern populace was war weary to the extent that they were ready to elect a new president in the coming fall elections in spite of the fact that the Union military was grinding slowly toward victory. The sacrifices of the previous 3 years would be for naught if the Northern people do not re-elect Abe Lincoln to a 2nd term. By August of 1864, the Yankee nation had grown so despondent that Lincoln's defeat in November was looked upon as a sure thing, and his replacement would be a man elected on a platform committed to ending the bloodshed. Confederate President Jefferson Davis and the Southern military leaders were well aware of this fact and did all in their power to exploit it. Early's raid on Washington and the burning of Chambersburg, PA are excellent examples. In political as well as military terms, U. S. Grant's numerous repulses and tremendous casualty figures in his '64 campaign against Robert E. Lee put the Confederacy closer to its goal of independence than ever before. This was in spite of the fact that Lee was penned up on the Richmond-Petersburg front and Sherman closing in on Atlanta. The people of the north wanted the fighting to stop and their surviving husbands, sons and friends in the army to come home because the people felt that the war was being lost. The northern populace was sick and tired of headlines which read "Sherman making progress in Georgia," "Grant has Lee trapped in Virginia." Sherman's progress had cost 30,000 dead and maimed soldiers, but the Confederates still held Atlanta. Grant had Lee trapped at the cost of over 75,000 casualties, but the Confederate Government in Richmond still functioned. As a result, Lincoln could not be re-elected unless a major, easily perceivable, Union victory occurred.

Abe Lincoln got this desperately needed victory on a battlefield south of Atlanta on August 31, 1864. On that day, Sherman's Army moved astride Hood's last railroad supply into Atlanta near Jonesboro. Hood made an attempt to dislodge Sherman which failed bloodily. Upon learning of this defeat, Hood ordered the evacuation of Atlanta. With the news that Atlanta fell northern spirit soared. Additionally, the Lincoln administration which had General Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley on a leash to avoid defeat, took off his muzzle and let him go now that they had a victory and were not so leery of defeat. Sheridan responded by winning 3 major signal victories in the Valley of Virginia. These victories would help lead Lincoln to re-election. Lincoln's re-election was an affirmation by the people of the United States to fight on to final victory.

The re-election of Lincoln was dependent upon the fall of Atlanta. If Hood manages to defeat Sherman and throw the Yankees off his last supply line and hold on until after the November elections Lincoln does not get re-elected. If Sherman is defeated on the battlefield, he would not undertake any new attempts to take Atlanta in a timely fashion. Sherman won 3 resounding victories over Hood between July 20 and July 27, but still did not make a serious move on Atlanta until the end of August. Imagine how slow Sherman would have moved if he had been defeated in battle. If Atlanta does not fall, Sheridan is kept chained up in the Valley out of fear and does not win his victories. Then come November, the people of the United States, still disgruntled over the lack of victory do not re-elect Abe Lincoln. If that happens, Lincoln's successor would ask Jefferson Davis for peace who politely grants it with the condition that the U. S. get its armies out of the Confederate States of America or face continued military action. Remember, the new U. S. president has been elected on the grounds that he will end the bloodshed and will oblige the president of the Confederacy. Thus as Sherman's victory at Jonesboro caused Atlanta to fall, August 31, 1864 is the most decisive day of the war because it set in motion a chain of events which allowed Lincoln to be re-elected. If Lincoln is not re-elected the South wins.

PRESERVATION UPDATE - NOVEMBER 1993

Submitted by Ralph and Renata Swanson

On September 13, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved, by unanimous vote, a motion to renew efforts to acquire Parcel 5 adjacent to the Ox Hill (Chantilly) Battlefield Park, near Fair Oaks Mall. The BRCWRT is vigorously supporting efforts by the county to acquire this parcel to allow for appropriate interpretation of this battlefield site. This does not assure acquisition of the land, but merely authorizes efforts to deal with the landowner and a developer who currently holds an option on the property. Please call Supervisor Michael Frey's office (Staff Contact: Paul Liberty, 703/378-9393) and thank him for his support on this acquisition.

The Interior Department's fiscal year 1994 budget (hopefully enacted by Congress when you read this) contains \$5 million for the Park Service to buy the 294-acre Best farm within the approved boundary of the Monocacy National Battlefield Park south of Frederick, MD. Currently, the Park has a Congressionally-approved size of 1,670 acres. Now the Park Service must set about acquiring land, usually through purchase and donation, within the approved boundary. In August, the Park Service closed a deal with the property owners for the first 220 acres of the farm.

The State of Maryland is making important progress in battlefield preservation. They have allocated \$3.6 million to acquire development rights to 835 acres around Antietam Battlefield. In addition, they propose to expend \$2.4 million for 1082 acres at Fox's and Turner's Gaps, and 675,000 for 268 acres at Crampton's Gap - all scenes of maneuvering and fighting that occurred along South Mountain on September 14, 1862, as a prelude to the Antietam battle. Acquisitions will be from willing sellers only and may include easements as well as outright purchase of land.

In a disappointing move, the Interior Department has testified against H.R. 746 (Wolfe-VA), the bill to establish a new National Battlefield Park in the Shenandoah Valley. The BRCWRT has yet to establish a position on this bill, but the idea of federal/local action to protect significant battlefield properties is generally to be favored. The Preservation Committee is seeking a copy of the Department testimony to ascertain the specific points of opposition, with the idea of rebutting this testimony directly to Rep. Wolfe.

GETTYSBURG DELUGE

Submitted by Gary Ecelbarger

The incessant rain, swirling winds, and menacing chill did little to dampen the spirits of the fourteen stalwarts who participated in the BRCWRT self-guided tour at Gettysburg, PA on Saturday, October 30, 1993. Our tour started at 10:00 a.m. with a review of the armies' organization and the action of the first day of battle. Despite maps that became soggy and a field of vision that was not 100% clear this particular morning, the members seemed to be little affected. Opinion and insight were offered by many, particularly when discussing "If Stonewall was Here..." After lunch the 2nd and 3rd days of the battle were reviewed. The group visited famous historical spots such as Little Round Top, Devil's Den, The Wheatfield, and the Peach Orchard which were reviewed at the brigade and regimental level. The tour ended at 3:30 p.m. with a detailed discussion of Picket's charge.

Many thanks must be given to our tour guides. This includes Ralph Swanson, who capably guided us through several tour stops, and was particularly adept at describing the Meade-Sickles Controversy at the Peach Orchard. President Kevin Leahy was especially impressive. The ghosts of Gettysburg were present this day; they kicked up the wind and rain in surreal fashion whenever Kevin began to speak. Despite these blatant attempts at interruption, Leahy adroitly described the battle organization and action at several stops, and added insight and trivia concerning the filming and accuracy of the Gettysburg movie as well as the controversies of the monument commission. I cannot imagine a professional battlefield guide providing more interesting information than Kevin did this day.

The members that participated deserve special commendation for braving the elements to be entertained for a day. They may be called a little crazy for going, but all who were there enjoyed themselves and took home memories of a day well spent while learning more about one of the greatest battles in world history.

OCTOBER'S TRIVIA ANSWERS

Claude Bradshaw will receive three raffle tickets for correctly answering last month's trivia questions:

- (1) Presidents Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Harrison, Garfield, Arthur, and McKinley were all former Union officers.
- (2) Grover Cleveland was the President who hired a substitute to serve in his place.

FROM THE RANKS

The following Federal and Confederate accounts were provided courtesy of Bron Wolf of the BRCWRT. They detail observations made during the Battle of Franklin, fought on November 30, 1864.

W.A. KEESEY - PRIVATE, 64TH OHIO

On our right the artillery teamsters stampeded. The ammunition went with the teams and caisson, and the gunners took picks, shovels, and anything at hand and nobly defended their guns. One gun was loaded but in the confusion caused by the stampede of the teamsters, had not been fired... A large crowd was rushing to the muzzle of the gun. The man with the lanyards trembling held his fire until the first rebel in the rush put his hands upon the muzzle of the cannon to spring over, when he let her go. Like a huge thunderbolt that awful roar and blast went blasting through that crowd of men, annihilating scores! Arms, legs, and mangled trunks were thrown in every direction.

The store buildings were turned into hospitals and filled with both Union and Confederate wounded. On coming to the first hospital I was confronted on the porch with men terribly wounded. One man shot through the jaw, his tongue protruding from his mouth, rested his head on his hands. Another shot in the thigh lay badly doubled up. I went into a room perhaps a hundred feet long. The men were laid with their heads to the wall and feet to the center of the room leaving aisles...I was at once struck by a sickening poisonous atmosphere that seemed to suffocate me. I supposed I would overcome this and pressed on, but by the time I had gotten ten feet I found I had none too much time left before fainting. The stench arising from putrefying wounds was really unbearable.

CONFEDERATE MAJOR JOHN SANDERS - ON STAFF OF GENERAL FRENCH

The Federal troops received the charging lines with steadiness and courage, and their fire was the most rapid and destructive of any during the war. The fire of small arms and artillery was so heavy and constant, and incessant that great clouds of smoke hung like a pall of universal darkness over the field, and completely obscured the movements of the assaulting lines except when the flashes of musketry lifted it like rifts in the clouds, and then could be seen, and only for an instant. The forms of the men in their lines, with their regimental colors, waver and reel to the

ground, fatally stricken, as the dense smoke again settles, to be lifted again and again by succeeding and rapidly successful flashes. On one part of the Federal lines, fronting the Confederate right, the musketry was rapid, constant and destructive and was almost live with fire from incessant flashes. Line after line hurled on the works, but, in each and every instant, the brave and heroic men were repulsed with loss of life fearful to contemplate. Officers and men, regimental colors, lay thick on the field from the abatis in front of the works where Featherstone's and Adam's men were piled, in some instances, seven deep on each other...

The Confederate loss of life was appalling. The exact number will never be known. A report of the killed in French's Division has never been made. This division as an organization was destroyed....No army at any time ever responded to the call of its commander with greater courage and assaulted breastworks with more gallantry and heroism than Hood's soldiers at Franklin.

CURRENT EVENTS

Submitted by Ralph Swanson

November 13 & 14 - Capital of the Confederacy CW Show - Probably the largest relic show on the east coast. 500+ tables. Sales and educational exhibits. An entire day of non-stop education. Virginia State Fair Grounds, Richmond. Admission. (804) 273-2358.

Arming the Confederacy - The southern effort to build a military-industrial complex. Virginia Historical Society, Kensington and Boulevard Streets, Richmond. A permanent exhibit. Open seven days per week. \$3. (804) 358-4901.

Confederate Battle Flag - A new exhibit interprets the history and controversy surrounding "the other stars and bars." White House of the Confederacy, 12th and E. Clay Streets, Richmond. Indefinite. Admission. (804) 649-1861.

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center - A temporary exhibit features the exploits of J.S. Mosby and J.E.B. Stuart in Fairfax County. Currently on display are some outstanding Stuart war possessions. A must-see for all BRCWRT members. 10209 Main St., Fairfax. Free.

* If any member would like a CW event announced in a subsequent newsletter, please notify Secretary Gary Ecelbarger (703) 406-4933. Deadlines are the 20th of each month.



Mike Duggan

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