



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
March 2023, Volume 20, Issue 3

Speaker: Chris Bryan
Topic: “Cedar Mountain to Antietam”
When: Monday March 13, 2023
Location: Brock’s Riverside Grill
Times: Social Time Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm
Our Website: www.rappvalleycivilwar.org
Our Facebook: www.facebook.com/rvcwrt

Chris Bryan “Cedar Mountain to Antietam”

Chris Bryan earned a B.S. in History from the United States Naval Academy, an M.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John’s College, Annapolis, and a Masters in Historic Preservation from the University of Maryland, College Park. The former naval aviator works as a project manager and lives in southern Maryland with his wife and two children. This is his first book.

"The II Corps, Army of Virginia (the future XII Corps, Army of the Potomac) suffered a bloody and demoralizing defeat at the Battle of Cedar Mountain on August 9th, 1862, after initial success where it nearly defeated Stonewall Jackson's command. This corps suffered through the hardships of Pope's campaign before and after the Battle of Second Manassas; and triumphed after entering Maryland and joining the reorganized Army of the Potomac. The men of this small corps earned a solid reputation in the Army of the Potomac at Antietam that would only grow during the battles of 1863. Bryan's unique study, which blends a campaign history with sound leadership assessments, puts the XII Corps' actions in proper context by providing significant and substantive treatment to its Confederate opponents. Bryan's extensive archival research, newspapers, and other important resources, together with detailed maps and images, offers a compelling story of a little-studied yet consequential command that fills a longstanding historiographical gap.

This talk will describe the II Corps' creation, the fighting at Cedar Mountain in detail, and the aftermath for the II Corps during Maj. Gen. John Pope's 2nd Manassas Campaign."

**"Mosby's Rangers vs. Cole's cavalry"
by Eric Buckland**

A Review of the February 2023 Program by Greg Mertz

Cole's Maryland Federal Cavalry battalion, under Henry A. Cole had formed up in August of 1861, while John Singleton Mosby's Confederate Partisan Rangers came into existence in January of 1863. During the first two months of 1864 these two units clashed in three fights. Each of these skirmishes were all small affairs, and what might be labeled as "low intensity conflicts" in today's terminology. But as our speaker Eric Buckland pointed out, for the men involved, with bullets whizzing by them, the fight entailed "high intensity" that was every bit as strong as it was for those engaged in major battles.

As partisan rangers, Mosby's men did not function as regular Confederate soldiers. The men did not camp together as a unit, but lived in a series of safe houses. Word would be passed along through a network of when and where the members should rendezvous. The rangers came converging on the agreed upon landmark from all directions of the compass. It was not

unusual for other Confederate soldiers to temporarily join with Mosby's Rangers for a raid or two.

The first clash between the units was on January 1, 1864 at a place called Five Points. Mosby had called for a rendezvous on that date at Rectortown, (called Atoka today) Virginia. Coincidentally, some of Cole's Cavalry had departed Harper Ferry under Captain Albert M. Hunter and was at Rectortown when Ranger Captain W. R. "Billy" Smith discovered the Union cavalymen already at their meeting point. Hunter, aware of the presence of Confederates all around him, decided his troopers should return to Harpers Ferry. Rather than reverse their route, Hunter decided to continue on before changing course and looping back toward where the rest of Coles' men had bivouacked. Mosby ordered three of his men to head them off, while the rest continued to follow, with the goal of striking Hunter's column in both front and rear.

The force closing in on Hunter's rear reached a stream called Cromwell's Run, which some of the Confederates accompanying them that were not Mosby Rangers hesitated to cross. Knowing that Mosby's men were outnumbered, several were not so sure that they wanted to be part of an upcoming fight. Smith "drew a line in the sand," riding across the stream and asking who was going which men were going to stick with him and which were not going any further. All of the men crossed the stream and continued with Smith.

The rangers had just left their safe houses that morning and their gunpowder was dry, which had not been the case of the Federal cavalry that had been out in the elements for days. Some 30 of Mosby's men engaged with 80 men from Cole's Cavalry, with many guns of the Federal horsemen misfiring on the damp morning. Things got worse when their commander, Capt. Hunter was captured, and the Federals broke. Mosby lost two men wounded, while the Federals lost one mortally wounded, two wounded and 35 captured, though Hunter would escape. Of the prisoners, 24 died in Confederate prisons.

The clash of January 10, 1864 on Loudoun Heights was one in which both leaders, John Singleton Mosby and Henry A. Cole, were present on the ground. Confederate scout Frank Stringfellow informed Mosby of Cole's men on the heights, and laid out a plan for their capture. Mosby with 110

men advanced from Upperville on a brutally cold day. The men sometimes dismounted to walk as a means of preventing their feet from becoming frost-bitten, and they stopped to warm up at two locations – the home of the father of one of the rangers called Woodgrove, and St. Paul's Church.

Mosby's men were in position to strike Cole's camp from the north. Stringfellow was given the privilege of taking a small party ahead of the battalion to capture the Federal commander Cole. A shot rang out, and Stringfellow turned around to head back to Mosby's men. Mosby thought the horsemen riding toward him constituted a Federal charge and opened fire. While the Confederates were engaged in "friendly fire," Cole's men, now alert to the threat, reacted. Since the Federal troopers had been sleeping and had just emerged from their tents when the attack began, one of Cole's men shouted "Shoot anyone who is mounted!" That turned the tide of the action and the Federals gained a victory.

Six rangers were killed, including at least two who were in Stringfellow's faction. Among the killed were a pair of talented leaders – Capt. W. R. "Billy" Smith, who had led the action nine days earlier at Five Points, and Lt. William Thomas "Prince Georges Tom" Turner. The other Confederate losses were two mortally wounded, four wounded and one captured. Mosby reported that the loss to his command was severe – not because of the number of men he lost, but the quality of the leaders who fell. His bitterness over the skirmish extended to Stringfellow. "Frank Stringfellow is a very brave man," Mosby declared, "but he is also a big liar." Mosby and Stringfellow never spoke again.

Cole's force numbered about 200, and he lost seven killed, thirteen wounded, and five captured. Capt. George Washington Fayette Vernon, believed to be the one who ordered the Federals to fire at horsemen, was shot in an eye. The skirmish at Loudoun Heights was the defining engagement for Cole's men, and whenever they held post-war reunions, they always held them close to the anniversary date of the skirmish.

The third conflict between the two units was at Blakeley's Grove School House on February 21, 1864. Cole's Cavalry rode from Upperville to Piedmont Station (modern day Delaplane) capturing eleven of Mosby's Rangers from their safe houses along the way. As other rangers learned of

the presence of the Federal patrol, some fired on Cole's men with carbines, and those shots alerted other rangers who rode to the sound of the firing.

Cole's Cavalrymen decided to retrace their steps, and Mosby's men took up the chase. The Federals took position behind a stone wall at Blakeley's Grove School House where they held off Mosby's men for a while. The fight took on a strange twist when somehow Federal Capt. William L. Morgan, Sr. challenged any ranger to a one on one fight. Mosby Ranger Pvt. Richard Paul Montjoy accepted the challenge and rode out to confront Morgan. Montjoy killed Morgan, the rangers struck the flank of Cole's men, and the rangers were soon in hot pursuit of the fleeing Federals for a couple of miles. Of the 50 men of Mosby's Rangers who were involved, three were wounded and eleven were captured. Among the 200 of Cole's Cavalry that were engaged, one was killed, one was mortally wounded, three were wounded and one was reported as missing.

Volunteers Needed at Graffiti House in Brandy Station

The Brandy Station Foundation is seeking volunteers to show visitors around the Graffiti House, so named because it is full of Civil War soldier signatures, messages and drawings. A minimum of two people – a Greeter and a Guide -- are always on duty, typically working a four-hour shift. The building is open from 12-4 every other Saturday from March to November, with the goal of opening every Friday-Sunday over the summer.

Greeters welcome visitors, determine whether they would like to take a guided tour, explain the history of the building, and sell gift shop items. Guides take visitors through the various rooms sharing what our research has uncovered about the graffiti, including the soldiers we have identified as signing their names, and the possible meanings of the messages and sketches they left behind on the walls.

When we have enough potential volunteers to form a class, we will host a six-hour training session, conducted by a retired National Park Service supervisor who has trained hundreds of employees and volunteers over his career. New volunteers will also shadow experienced volunteers until they are comfortable with the duties.

If interested, please contact the foundation at bsfgh1863@gmail.com. Please feel free to share this with anyone whom think might enjoy this experience. We look forward to imparting our volunteers with techniques on how to share this unique Civil War resource with our visitors!

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF FREDERICKSBURG (CWRTF)

CWRTF meets 9 times a year on designated Wednesdays at Mary Washington Jepson Alumni Executive Center, 1119 Hanover Street. They offer a buffet dinner followed by a Civil War-themed presentation. Reservations are required. Speaker/topic schedule can be found on their website at www.cwrftf.org, as well as below. As with our round table, things are subject to change due to the ups and downs of Covid.

CWRTF Schedule

March 22, 2023 - John Quarstein, THE POWER OF IRON OVER WOOD

April 26, 2023 - Codie Eash, US SIGNAL CORPS

May 24, 2023 - Stephen Cushman, THE GENERAL'S CIVIL WAR: WHAT THEIR MEMOIRS CAN TEACH US TODAY

June 21, 2023 - Paul Brueske, THE LAST SIEGE - 1865 MOBILE CAMPAIGN

September 27, 2023 - John Vagnetti, THE CIVIL WAR, A POSTAL SYSTEM DIVIDED

October 25, 2023 - Sarah Kay Bierle, THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK

November 15, 2023 - Ken Rutherford, AMERICA'S BURIED HISTORY: LANDMINES IN THE CIVIL WAR

March 27, 2024 - Christian Keller, SOUTHERN STRATEGIES

Who We Are

The Drum and Bugle Newsletter is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 7632, Fredericksburg VA 22404. The newsletter is available on our website at www.rappvalleycivilwar.org. Yearly membership dues are \$40 for individuals and \$50 for families. Students are free. Membership is open to anyone interested in the military, political and social history of the American Civil War.

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