



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

**Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
April 2017, Volume 14, Issue 4**

Speaker: Mac Wyckoff
Topic: "Civil War Soldiers Go West"
When: Monday, April 10, 2017
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Abstract on our Scheduled Speaker for April 10, 2017, Mac Wyckoff

Our scheduled speaker for the April 10, 2017, dinner will be our own Mac Wyckoff, visiting from Oregon. Mac graduated from Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, with a degree in history. He worked thirty years, as a historian for the National Park Service, including working the last twenty-two years here in Fredericksburg, VA. Mac is one of the initial co-founders of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table and he has served as president, vice president, and for many years as the newsletter and website editor. In 2008, Mac retired in order to return home to Eugene, Oregon. Moving there, to provide care for his aging parents and to also attend University of Oregon, athletic events.

Mac has studied Joseph Kershaw's South Carolina Brigade for twenty-seven years and he's written books on both, the 2nd and 3rd South Carolina regiments, as well as, several journal articles on the South Carolina Brigade. Mac's latest book, *The Letters of Alexander McNeill, 2nd South Carolina* was published late last year by the University of South Carolina Press. While in Fredericksburg, Mac wrote columns for the Free Lance-Star on the *Human Side of the Warrior*.

In April, Mac's presentation will be mostly about five Civil War soldiers and he will more briefly focus on several others, who each went west after the Civil War. All of these men led interesting – and in some cases important lives – in the Great Pacific Northwest. The stories of the five major soldiers Mac will discuss have a surprise twist ending or two to their stories and all of the stories have a connecting thread. Two of the stories have actually continued to develop within the past year. Mac has had to stay on top of these two stories to learn the latest developments. That this story of a long dead soldier continues to develop is part of what intrigues Mac about this topic.

Is your RVCWRT membership past due? It was, as of December 31, 2016.

By Bob Pfile

Have you renewed your RVCWRT membership? Last year we had 142 paid members, to date we have just 100 paid members, this includes a number of paid family memberships. Our new approved membership cost is only \$35.00 for an individual membership, \$45.00 for a family membership with student memberships just \$7.50 each. All membership payments were due by NLT than the end of December 2016. If you have not paid your membership dues, please do so ASAP.

"Kill Jeff Davis: The Union Raid on Richmond, 1864"

by Bruce Venter

Review of our March 20, 2017 program by Greg Mertz

You may ask, was the objective of what is sometimes called the "*Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid*" in February and March of 1864, to actually kill Confederate President Jefferson Davis? While there is no clear-cut answer to this question, Bruce Venter explained there was evidence that both supported and undermined the purpose of this controversial aspect of the raid. He also pointed out many important facets of this fascinating cavalry operation.

The raid was led by 26 year old Judson Kilpatrick, who graduated early from West Point due to the outbreak of Civil War. Kilpatrick was the best orator in his class, and had keen political sense and was a benefactor of the largess of New York Judge Henry Davies. During the Chancellorsville Campaign of May 1863, the Federal cavalry launched a raid to cut the Confederate supply line, and Kilpatrick's regiment got closer to Richmond than any other unit.

Lincoln learned from a Federal soldier who had formerly been detained in a Richmond prison within the Confederate capitol that had been lightly defended, and the United States president began to think about the possibility of capturing his Confederate counterpart. The first such attempt was made by Benjamin Butler whose cavalry approached Richmond from the east. Each regiment involved in the planned raid was to have its own mission, with one tasked with capturing Davis and taking him to Bottom's Bridge for escort into Union lines. Ironically Lincoln's hope to seize Davis was dashed by someone for whom he had just done a grave favor. Lincoln had recently overturned the sentence for the execution of a Union soldier, who then escaped from Union captivity, made his way to Richmond and warned the Confederate authorities of the plan! When the Union cavalry approached Bottom's Bridge, the Confederates were waiting for them and the overall plan was foiled.

As the prisoner exchange system broke down, the number of Union captives being held in Richmond swelled to 13,000 men. Setting them free became another strong reason for launching a raid on Richmond.

Kilpatrick's involvement in the next raid on Richmond was due to his political connections. Lincoln summoned Kilpatrick to Washington, where he also met with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Kilpatrick asked for 4,000 well-mounted men and a battery of artillery for the raid. Custer, whom Kilpatrick did not like, was sent on a diversion to attempt to destroy a railroad bridge near Charlottesville. Butler was to once again move up the Peninsula east of Richmond for support.

Ulric Dahlgren, a 21-year old Union colonel and the son of Rear Admiral John Dahlgren, became a part of the raid shortly before it began. The admiral was very close to the president. Young Dahlgren was not content with his staff position and wanted a command. He was allowed to lead a cavalry charge in Hagerstown, Maryland on July 6, 1863 during the Gettysburg Campaign in his only association with Kilpatrick prior to the planned raid on Richmond. Dahlgren was wounded in the foot, gangrene set in, his leg was amputated beneath the knee, and when it appeared that he was going to die, he was promoted from captain to colonel. Dahlgren survived and became the colonel without a command, whose family was connected with the first family. Dahlgren visited Lincoln and soon he showed up at Kilpatrick's headquarters to participate in the raid.

Dahlgren was given 450 men and the mission to cross the James River west of Richmond and to approach the Belle Isle prison from the south. Kilpatrick took the rest of his command on a route north of the James. When Kilpatrick struck Beaver Dam Station on the Virginia Central Railroad, the Union cavalry came close to achieving a major coup, Confederate army commander Robert E. Lee had passed through that point some 90 minutes earlier. Lee was returning to his headquarters near Orange, VA after meeting with President Jeff Davis.

On the second day of the raid, February 29, 1864, it began to rain and sleet. When Dahlgren's guide, a black man with the first name of Martin, took that faction of the raid to the ford, the James River was at flood stage. When he sought to lead the group to a different location, he likely became confused, but Dahlgren believed he had been purposely deceived, and had Martin hung.

Advancing along the north side of the river, Dahlgren's 450 raiders encountered 600 Confederate local defense troops at the Green House, which still stands. Many of the defenders were young men who were not serving in the army because they held skilled jobs, including workers from the Tredegar Iron works. They were not boys and old men as many home guards were in other sections of the South, but these men were able bodied men who were ordered to hold their fire until the Union

troops reached a close, but deadly range and then to fire two shots. Their shots emptied about fifty saddles, and Dahlgren with some 90 men became separated from another body of 250 men.

Kilpatrick approached Richmond from the north, down the Brook Pike. Just as the rain and sleet had swollen the ford and disrupted Dahlgren's plans, so the weather caused the fields on either side of the Brook Pike to become too muddy for Kilpatrick's cavalry to cross when under fire from the defenses of Richmond. Kilpatrick also attracted the attention of Confederate General Wade Hampton with a pair of veteran cavalry regiments and a pair of cannon, and Kilpatrick abandoned his attempt to reach Richmond.

Dahlgren with the home guards in hot pursuit, wanted to reach the protection of the Union gunboats at Gloucester Point on the York River. When Dahlgren encountered Confederates in front of him who declared that the road was barricaded and gave him the opportunity to surrender, the colonel refused and was soon struck by five bullets and killed.

When a 13 year old boy went through Dahlgren's possessions, the youth found documents that were passed along to Confederate authorities. Dahlgren had two sets of orders: one set called for the capture of Davis and then setting Richmond on fire; the other set called for Jefferson Davis to be killed.

Photographic copies were made of the orders and sent to federal officials. General Braxton Bragg and Secretary of War James Seddon felt that the Confederates should hang all of those raiders who had been captured. Lee was troubled by the proposal, in part because he had been arranging for the exchange of his son Rooney. Federal authorities denied that their assassinating Davis was any part of the plan, with Judson Kilpatrick declaring that he certainly did not issue those orders to Ulric Dahlgren. Plans for the upcoming campaign ended further debate over whether the raid had any sinister intentions.

Reminder: Please contact Bob Jones to order dinner in advance
To confirm reservations: Telephone Bob Jones @ 540-399-1702 or send an e-mail to
cwrtedinner@yahoo.com or bobnpeg1954@gmail.com

THE RVCWRT 2017 BUS TOUR

Saturday, May 20th, 2017

Determined to Stand and Fight: *The Battle of Monocacy*
and

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine

Cost: Prior to May 1st, for members and their guests the cost is reduced to \$ 90.00 each

Cost: After May 1st, for members and their guests the cost will be \$100.00 each

Bus Tour: Includes lunch, necessary site fees at *Monocacy Battlefield*, handouts and a scholarly lecture at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD, titled "*Mythbusters*" The True Story of Civil War Medicine.

Bus departure: Bus leaves from the *Gordon Road Commuter Lot* at 8:00 a.m. on May 20th, returning at 6:00 p.m.

Tour Guides: Ryan Quint and Marc Thompson will be our Tour Guides for this trip.

• For information or reservations contact Bob Jones @ bobnpeg1954@gmail.com or call 540-399-1702

The RVCWRT Bulletin Board

By Jim Smithfield

RVCWRT maintains a special bulletin board that is placed against the right side wall where guests enter the dining room. This Bulletin Board is utilized during each of our dinner meetings. Members will find many different articles about the Civil War placed there. These are there to be requested by members for personal reading. Also, there is information posted on the bulletin board on upcoming Civil War related events, along with various items of interest. Along with the various posted announcements, Civil War articles and related material will be placed there. These items may each be requested and borrowed to take home to read.

The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg

By Bob Jones

As a courtesy, the RVCWRT is providing as a regular feature each month, the ongoing scheduled speakers for the CWRTF's Program Year. The *Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg* normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except for the meeting being held on the third Wednesday in June 2017). Their Dinner Meetings are held at the MWW's Jepson Center located at 1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA, dinner cost is \$32.00 for each person. Reservations should be made by telephoning 540-361-2105. As noted below, the scheduled speaker for the upcoming April 26, 2017, program will be Teresa Roane. Ms. Roane will be presenting "*Minorities in the Confederate Army.*"



CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers For the 2017 Program Year

APR. 26, 2017 TERESA ROANE – Minorities in the Confederate Army

MAY 24, 2017 PATRICK A. SCHROEDER, NPS - Pardons and the Amnesty Oath and The Oath of Allegiance of Confederate Soldiers

JUN 21, 2017* SHANNON. PRITCHARD – Collecting the Confederacy

(*This date occurs on the 3rd Wednesday during the month of June)

Moments from the Battlefield and the Homefront *An All-Encompassing Civil War Living History Event*

Students of the American Civil War:

On the weekend of May 6 – 7, 2017, our *National Park Service*, in conjunction with multiple *Living Historian Organizations*, will present to the public a full spectrum event that will cover unique aspects of the *Battle of the Wilderness*.

Having never been brought together into a single location, these interactive activities will allow for a new understanding of what occurred here before, during, and after the battle. Taking place at *Ellwood* and the *Tapp Farm Field* the public will be able to take advantage of the NPS interpretive programs and the in-depth *Living History* presentations to learn what happened.

Each month a new article will be posted that will highlight a different *Living History Organization* who will participate in this event. The presented information will allow the public to have a better understanding of what will be made available to them when they arrive on either day. These multiple programs are perfect for the serious student or someone who is new to the area and wants to learn something about our Civil War. Regardless of how much they knew before they arrived, it is hoped that upon departure all participants will have a better appreciation of what occurred on this sacred ground.

As promised, the first featured unit will be *Company K, 1st South Carolina Infantry, Provisional, "Irish Volunteers"*. On both days of this event you will find the Irish Volunteers out at the *Tapp Farm* where they will participate in multiple NPS led maneuver and firing demonstrations. To learn more about them, please continue to read on.

Company K, 1st South Carolina Infantry, Provisional, was a unit whose members came mostly from the Charleston area. The unit was known as the *Irish Volunteers* and it was originally formed in 1787, as a militia unit. The *Irish Volunteers* remained a State Militia unit up until the *Spanish – American War*.

This unit was organized into the Confederate service on June 25, 1861, and fought in almost all major battles in the Eastern Theatre with the *Army of Northern Virginia*. It was led by such notable commanders as Maxey Gregg, Samuel McGowan, Edward McCrady, and C.W. McCreary. The unit distinguished itself at the *Battle of Gaines Mill* on June 27, 1862, and again at the *Battle of Spotsylvania* on May 12, 1864.

The original Civil War unit had a total of 2,120 men serving in its ranks during the four years of civil war and had a total of 18 officers and 101 men surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

The mission of today's Irish Volunteers is: To preserve and protect the memory of those men who served in the company from 1861 – 1865 and those who fought and died for South Carolina and *The Confederate States of America*. As civilians of the company, to portray the families of those men who served, to honor preserve, protect, and honor the memory of all those who fought on both sides in the War for Southern Independence. Preserve and honor their memories and ensure that the families, too, are not forgotten. To accurately portray the trades, occupations, and pastimes of the period and to aid in the preservation of battlefields and all other sites and objects relevant to the War for Southern Independence.



Participating Units

CWCS – Civil War Civilians of Spotsylvania – Elaine Sturgeon, miselaineus@yahoo.com

CWIA – Civil War Impressionist Association – Brian Withrow, bnwithrow@outlook.com

1st S.C. Infantry “Irish Volunteers” – Troy Fallon, jtfmaf@embarqmail.com

2nd U.S. Cavalry “Dragoons” – David Michel, usdragoons@aol.com

3rd U.S. Infantry “Buffsticks” – Paul Stier, stierdog@hotmail.com

NPS – Artillery Crew – Peter Maugle, peter_maugle@nps.gov



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. Each month, The Drum and Bugle newsletter is also placed on our web-site, www.RVCWRT.org. Yearly membership dues are \$35.00 for individuals, \$45.00 for families, and only \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the ongoing preservation of Civil War sites.

The RVCWRT Executive Committee:

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|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| President/Dinner Meetings: | Bob Jones | Webmaster: | Dan Augustine |
| Vice President: | John Sapanara | Membership: | Ryan Quint |
| Secretary: | Ben Keller | Research/Historian: | Joyce Darr |
| Treasurer: | Bob Pfile | Member at Large: | John Griffiths |
| Assistant Treasurer: | Barbara Stafford | Member at Large: | Conway Richardson |
| Meeting Scribe: | Greg Mertz | Member at Large: | Paul Stier |
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Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Post Office Box 7632
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404