



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
September 2019, Volume 16, Issue 9

Speaker: Patrick A. Schroeder
Topic: "Zouaves: America's Forgotten Soldiers"
When: Monday, September 9, 2019
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Patrick A. Schroeder, "Zouaves: America's Forgotten Soldiers"

Patrick A. Schroeder is a Civil War author/historian who has written, edited and/or contributed to more than twenty-five Civil War titles. He resides in Lynchburg, Virginia and has worked as an independent researcher and tour guide. He is the historian for Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park. Patrick graduated Cum Laude with a BS in Historical Park Administration from Shepherd College in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. He has a MA in Civil War History from Virginia Tech. In an effort to protect sites relevant to the Appomattox Campaign, Patrick has set up the "Appomattox Fund" with the Civil War Trust, to save land important to the climactic events of April 1865.

Patrick will present "Zouaves: America's Forgotten Soldiers." He will discuss the origins of Zouaves in North Africa, the distinguished exploits of French Zouaves in the Crimean War and in Italy, and Elmer Ellsworth and the "Zouave craze" in America. Slides will demonstrate various styles of American Zouave uniforms, both North and South, and provide capsule histories on famous Zouave units. Reproduction Zouave uniforms will be on display.

"1864: The Fall of the Confederate Navy" by Chris Kolakowski
A Review of the August 2019 program by Greg Mertz

The year of 1864 was a year of decision that would define the future course of the war. It was decisive regarding the war at sea as well, as the Confederate Navy reached its peak in 1864.

The respective navies had three missions. Each navy provided support for the army's land operations. The United States navy had the goal of maintaining if not further constricting the blockade, while the Confederate navy sought to break or loosen it. The Union navy sought to protect United States commerce on the high seas, while Confederate raiders sought to destroy shipping and ruin the United States economy. The naval war in 1864 operated in four theaters: the James River; the North Carolina Sounds; Charleston, South Carolina; the coast along the Gulf of Mexico, and the high seas of the Atlantic Ocean. While the James River and Charleston will effectively be a draw during 1864, the other three theaters would witness decisive action.

The Confederates spent 18 months prior to April of 1864 constructing a gunboat to operate in the Sounds of North Carolina, named the *CSS Albemarle*. The sounds, with port cities at the mouth of the rivers emptying into the sound, and its Outer Banks providing access to get in and out of the sound -- as well as places to hide -- were ideal for blockade running. But by 1864, the Union controlled these port cities and limited Confederate water operations to the inland rivers. The Union vulnerability was that only lightly armored, shallow draft gunboats could operate in the sounds.

Confederate General Robert Hoke was given 10,000 men to attack and lay siege to the Federal troops at the port city of Plymouth, at the mouth of the Roanoke River where it flows into Pamlico Sound. The campaign was a combined operation with the ironclad ram *CSS Albemarle* coming down the Roanoke River to do combat with the Union paddle steamers operating there. The *Albemarle* rammed the *USS Sassacus*, but struck with such force that the ram got stuck on the hull of the Union steamer. As the Union boat sank, the *Albemarle* broke free and then chased off the *USS Miami*. With the river clear of Union gunboat, the *Albemarle* opened fire on the Union troops in the city of Plymouth. Two days later, the Union garrison surrendered.

On May 5, the Union Navy went after the *CSS Albemarle* with five paddle steamers under Lieutenant Commander Charles W. Flusser. One gunboat was sunk, the boilers of another was struck, and the other three escaped, with Flusser being killed in the action.

While the *CSS Albemarle* had done well thus far in its two engagements, the engagement with Flusser coincided with Grant's coordinated effort to get all Union armies to simultaneously apply pressure to the Confederates. When General Benjamin Butler set sail for the Bermuda Hundred Campaign, the Confederates needed troops to defend Richmond. Hoke's troops were transferred to Virginia, and without them, the action in the North Carolina sounds turned into a stalemate. The Confederates had loosened the blockade, but could not break it. Then in October, William Cushing led a daring expedition in which he was able to sneak into Plymouth and blow a hole in the hull of the *Albemarle*.

Eight major commissioned Confederate raiders pursued United States merchant ships, with three of them recording more than 30 kills: the *CSS Alabama* with 65, the *CSS Florida* had 38 and the *CSS Shenandoah* with 37.

The *CSS Alabama*, under Captain Raphael Semmes, was commissioned in August of 1862 in the north Atlantic Ocean and went on a cruise around the world, reaching Singapore in September, 1863. Built for speed, but being at sea for more than a year,

the *Alabama* was in need of maintenance to return to peak performance. Semmes needed a place where the *Alabama* could stay for more than a day, and considered which countries had assisted the Confederacy in the past. France had helped outfit the *CSS Florida* in the summer of 1863 and Semmes figured they might help the *Alabama* too. Along the way to France, the *Alabama* took two more ships – the final two prizes of its career.

On June 11, 1864 the *Alabama* arrived at Cherbourg, France, but Semmes quickly discovered he had made a mistake. Cherbourg had numerous shipyards, but they were all French government facilities dedicated to supporting the French Navy. The U.S. embassy sent our telegrams to see if any US ships were nearby, reporting the *Alabama* in port at Cherbourg. The *USS Kearsarge* under Captain John Winslow was on the Belgian coast and responded to the alarm.

Semmes's impressive record, with one exception, was made against defenseless ships, and his other victory was versus a gunboat with but two guns against the eight arming the *Alabama*. Semmes was anxious to prove his mettle when facing an equal vessel. Semmes challenged Winslow to a duel to take place on June 19. Telegrams of the scheduled fight were sent out and crowds from Paris lined the heights to witness the battle. Winslow, waiting in international waters near the three-mile limit, was able to draw the *Alabama* to the eight-mile point, so she could not easily slip back into the safety of neutral waters. The *Alabama* fired three times more rapidly than the *Kearsarge*, and while most shots went high, one of its shell became embedded in the rudder post of the *Kearsarge*, but did not explode. As the ships circled one another, the *Alabama* started to draw water, and after the 8th circuit, the *Alabama* headed back for Cherbourg. At about 12:20 pm, only about 20 minutes into the race back to port, the *Alabama* lowered her colors and sank. The *Alabama* lost 21 killed or drowned, while the *Kearsarge* suffered three wounded.

The final decisive naval action of the year occurred on the Gulf Coast at Mobile Bay. Though Ulysses S. Grant had been interested in launching a campaign against Mobile, Alabama since 1862, it was not until the summer of the third year of the war that the United States could muster the resources – including a naval expedition of eighteen ships under Admiral David G. Farragut. The Confederate naval defenders under Admiral Franklin Buchanan, boasted the ironclad *CSS Tennessee* and three small gunboats. What the Confederate defense lacked in firepower, it made up for in geography. The navigable channel into the bay is very narrow, with two-thirds of it obstructed with torpedoes, and the mouth of the bay guarded by two forts. Buchanan waited to the north, ready to deal with any ships that happened to make it past the torpedoes and the bombardment from the forts.

At 6:47 am, on August 5, 1864, the Battle of Mobile Bay began, with the Confederate forts opening fire on the Union vessels. Shortly after 7:00 am the Union ironclad, the *USS Tecumseh* strayed from the main channel, struck a torpedo and sank two minutes later. The lead ship, the *USS Brooklyn*, hesitated, not wanting to strike a torpedo itself. Following the *Brooklyn* was Farragut's flagship, the *USS Hartford*, which also slowed down when within ideal range of the guns of Fort Morgan. Farragut ordered the captain of the ship to go around the *Brooklyn*. When the officer responded by pointing

out the danger of the torpedoes, Farragut's famous reply followed: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" The *Hartford* with the rest of the fleet sailed into Mobile Bay, hearing the "pop" of the detonators for the water-logged torpedoes that do not explode.

The *Tennessee*, positioned under the protection of the guns of Fort Morgan, could have effectively trapped Farragut's fleet inside the bay, but Buchanan ordered the captain of the *Tennessee* to leave the fort behind and to go out and take on the Union fleet. The Union Navy rammed the *Tennessee* and fired at her a point-blank range for more than an hour, leaving the most powerful ironclad the Confederacy had ever built as a smoking wreck.

The Union army had won the Naval War in 1864 on the North Carolina sounds, on the high seas of the Atlantic and on the Gulf Coast.

RVCWRT ART PRINT RAFFLE

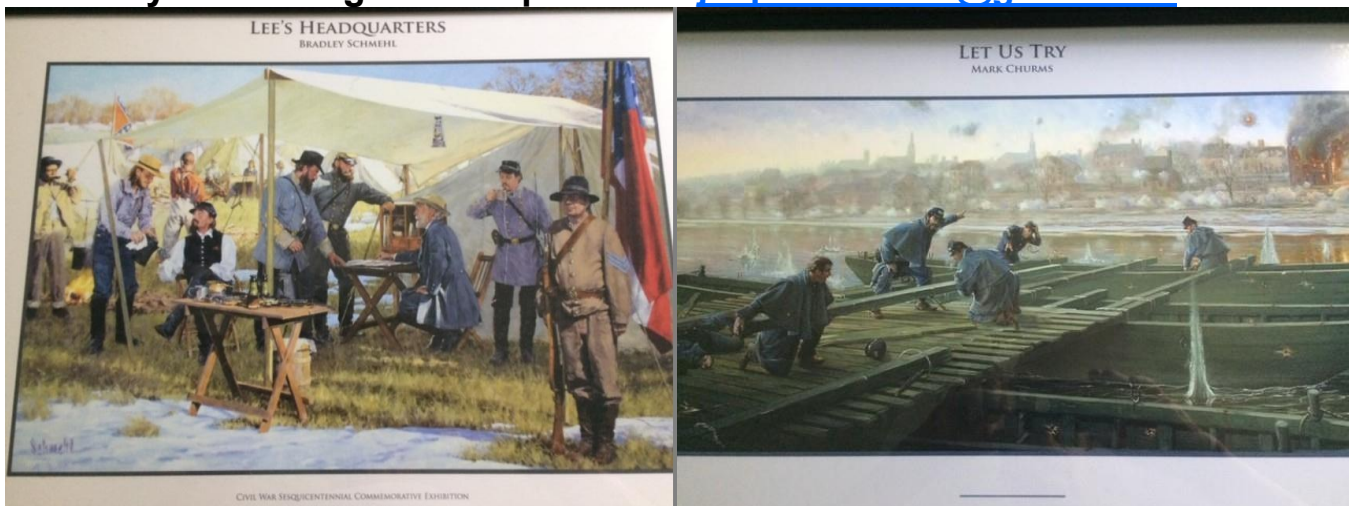
RVCWRT is raffling off two professionally framed and matted Civil War prints, "Let Us Try" by Mark Churms and "Lee's Headquarters" by Bradley Schmehl. Each measures 18 ½" x 26 ½" including frame. These prints are from the 2012 Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemorative Exhibition at the Fredericksburg Area Museum.

Raffle tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10. A maximum of 150 tickets will be sold.

First ticket drawn wins choice, second ticket drawn receives the remaining print.

Proceeds benefit the RVCWRT scholarship fund. Tickets will be sold at the June, July and August RVCWRT dinner meetings.

Drawing will be at the September 9, 2019 dinner meeting. Winners need not be present to win. **Tickets can also be reserved by contacting John Sapanara at jsapanara7891@gmail.com.**



Ongoing Reminder

Please contact Bob Jones to order your dinner in advance or to confirm your dinner reservation. Please call Bob Jones @ 540-399-1702 or send him your e-mail at

cwrtedinner@yahoo.com



From the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS)- Massachusetts Photograph Collection.



The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg By Bob Jones

As a courtesy, the RVCWRT provides as a regular feature each month, the ongoing scheduled speakers for the CWRTF's 2018 Program Year. The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except for one meeting held on the third Wednesday of June 2018). Dinner Meetings are held at the UMW's Jepson Center located at [1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA](#), dinner cost is \$32.00 per person. Advance reservations should be made by email: dinner@cwrtf.org or telephone: 540-361-2105.

CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers for the 2019 Program Year:

Sept. 25, 2019	Brian E. Withrow	"Ulysses S. Grant in Character"
Oct. 23, 2019	Michael K. Shaffer	"In Memory of Self and Comrades: Thomas W. Colley's Recollection"
Nov. 20, 2019	William Freehling	"Becoming Lincoln"
Jan. 22, 2020	Ryan Longfellow	"Grant and the Battle of the Wilderness"
Feb. 26, 2020	Chris Kolakowski	"Perryville and the Kentucky Campaign"

Mar. 25, 2020	Dr. Caroline E. Janney	“Burying the Dead, But Not the Past. The Ladies Memorial Association”
Apr. 22, 2020	Gordon Rhea	“The Generalship of Lee and Grant in the Overland Campaign”
May 27, 2020	John Biemeck	“Civil War Ordnance”
Jun. 17, 2020	Paul Kahan	“The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant: Preserving the Civil War’s Legacy”

Stafford County in the Civil War

Stafford County played a major role in the Union Army’s efforts in Virginia. A few bullets about Stafford County before and during the Civil War:

- Stafford County’s White Oak area is the ancestral home of the Potowamac (or Potomac) Indians, many of whom still inhabit the White Oak area.
- George Washington was raised in Stafford County. This is where he supposedly chopped down the cherry tree (untrue) and where he tossed a coin across a river (not a silver dollar, which did not exist, and not the Potomac, which ranges up to two miles wide.)
- Some of the earliest shots of the Civil War were in Stafford County. In May, 1861, Union warships on the Potomac River fired on Confederate batteries set up on the shore in Stafford County. No casualties on either side.
- Stafford County contains the only building known to have been visited by both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln – Chatham Manor, which today is headquarters for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. During the Civil War, it was known as the Lacey house, after Horace Lacey, who ran a plantation there with about 150 slaves.
- Lincoln visited Stafford County six times during 1862 and 1863. His visits were to the approximately 135,000 Union troops who were stationed there.
- Aquia Landing, at the confluence of Aquia Creek and the Potomac River was a major supply depot for the Union Army, and a major conduit for escaping slaves. North-bound slaves, once they crossed the Rappahannock River into Stafford County were safe. They could then stroll north a few miles to Aquia Landing, hop an empty supply ship, and be brought north. With 135,000 Union soldiers in the county, the slaves did not fear the slave patrols that were common south of the Rappahannock.

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 an individual, \$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:

President/Dinner Meeting:	Bob Jones	Member at Large:	Robin Donato
Vice President:	John Sapanara	Member at Large:	John Griffiths
Secretary:	Melanie Jordan	Member at Large:	Barbara Stafford
Treasurer:	Ben Keller	Media & Events Coordinator:	Paul Steir
Meeting Scribe:	Greg Mertz	Past President:	Marc Thompson
Membership Chair:	Pail Steir	Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:	Dan Augustine

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