



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

**Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
January 2017, Volume 14, Issue 1**

Speaker: Jim Smithfield
Topic: "Overlooked Confederates"
When: Monday, January 9, 2017
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm

Abstract on our Scheduled Speaker, Jim Smithfield, Monday, January 9, 2017

The scheduled speaker for our January 9, 2017, meeting will be Jim Smithfield. Having been Editor of the Drum and Bugle Newsletter for the past ten years, it's been my pleasure each month to present bio's on our many speakers. It was in 2016, that my book, "*Overlooked Confederates*" was published. At one point, I was somewhat unsure if it would be published. You see, my publisher, *Outskirts Press*, decided at the last minute to have my book reviewed by a Historian to be certain that I was not presenting any incorrect facts. Their stated reasoning was that, not being a regular publisher of history related books, they did not want to be involved in a possible lawsuit. Well, my book passed and it was published in February of 2016.

The initial idea for "*Overlooked Confederates*" was to simply present the facts with period photographs of minority individuals who, although part of a minority, gave up everything to support the Confederacy! In fact, in all too many cases these individuals gave their fortunes, as well as their lives! Several individuals have asked me, were their sacrifices appreciated and no matter how great the sacrifice might have been, not by all!

One prime example of how minorities who'd fought for the South were treated occurred directly after the war. The Confederate cemeteries at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Courthouse were then being developed. Those many Jewish Confederate soldiers who died in area battles and who had fought in the *Virginia Theater* of the war were denied burial in either cemetery in an open act of anti-Semitism. Publicly officials from both cemeteries stated they did not want any "*Jewish Boys*" buried in either cemetery.

It is both interesting and heart-warming to note, that due mainly to this action by the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania cemeteries, the *Hebrew Ladies Memorial Association of Richmond* was born and these ladies took it into their hands to develop a separate Jewish military cemetery. This is only one of two Jewish military cemeteries outside of the state of Israel. Note: There is today a memorial in *Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery* to the many Jewish Confederates, Nurses, Statesmen, Soldiers and others.

The RVCWRT Bulletin Board

The 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 their personal reading. Also, there will be information posted on the bulletin board about 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 may each be requested and borrowed to take home to read.

Reminder: Contact Bob Jones to order Dinner in advance
To Confirm Reservations: Telephone 540-399-1702 or send an e-mail to
cwrtedinner@yahoo.com or bobnpeg1954@gmail.com

Most Perfect Order and Splendid Style:
Justification for Civil War Battlefield Tactics
Presented by Peter Maugle
Review of the December 2016 program by Greg Mertz

A common criticism of Civil War tactics is that they did not adapt to the addition of rifled muskets in the hands of the infantrymen – that with widespread use of rifles during the Civil War, the tactics that career officers had learned became suddenly obsolete. Peter Maugle declared that such an explanation for the seemingly high number of Civil War casualties was not only an oversimplification of the situation, but that his study of how Civil War soldiers fought even runs contradictory to the fundamental premise that the rifled musket dramatically changed 19th century warfare.

Maugle is a student of both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, and he also has a broad military history background. He has also been involved in living history and has had an opportunity to fire live rounds using Civil War muskets and artillery pieces that contribute to his perspective and understanding of just which aspects of the Civil War combat are unique.

While the rifled musket had been in existence for quite a long time prior to the Civil War, Maugle explained that making rifles with the spiral grooves during the pre-Industrial Revolution period was a very expensive operation and it was cost prohibitive to furnish an entire army with rifles. The Civil War could be considered the first major war in which large numbers of rifled muskets were employed, but they may not have been as effective as most students of the Civil War have been led to believe. Even though the rifling causes the bullet it fires to spin, giving it greater range and accuracy at long range than a non-rifled or smoothbore musket, other factors prevented the Civil War soldier from realizing the full benefit of the rifle.

In order to take full advantage of the nearly 500 yard range of a rifle, Civil War soldiers had to elevate the barrel of their weapon when firing at anything more than 150 yards away. Maugle showed an image of the parabolic curve of a rifled projectile when striking an object at a long range. He explained that the sights on the rifle could only be set at 100 yard intervals, so unless the target was at the exact distance of some 100 yard increment. The infantryman then had to make adjustments to their aim. Maugle also demonstrated with a reproduction weapon how a soldier could not hold his weapon in place after making a shot and then make a correction with his gun before firing the next

shot. This was because he had to drop his muzzle-loading weapon to the ground for reloading thus losing practically all opportunity to slightly alter his aim. Maugle's own experience in firing reproduction Civil War weapons at a target was that he had great difficulty making vertical adjustments. His shots typically either fell long or short when firing at a shallow two rank deep target which the Civil War battle line often presented to the enemy. Target practice with a drill instructor advising the marksman what he needed to do to improve his aim, was virtually non-existent during the Civil War. This lack of training combined with the other factors meant that riflemen did not have an overwhelming advantage over smoothbore toting soldiers.

Smoothbore guns were not without some advantages over the rifle. The common ammunition round fired by a smoothbore musket was called buck and ball. In addition to firing a large ball of approximately .69 caliber, it also contained three pieces of buckshot, increasing the chances that one of the four projectiles would strike an enemy soldier.

With smoothbore artillery pieces, some had some very significant benefits over rifled cannon. While both types of artillery had similar challenges in timing the fuses of exploding projectiles to detonate over their targets, it was much easier to strike a target with the solid shot of a smoothbore cannon. When an elongated rifled solid shot hit the ground without striking the target, it would generally burrow harmlessly into the dirt. But gun crews of smoothbore cannon often purposely struck the ground in front of the target because its round solid shot would bounce off of the ground, bounding along until it often struck a target, while also often playing havoc with the rear echelons of the opposing army as well.

Since Civil War artillerymen did not have an opportunity for a spotter to report to them how accurately their rounds fell (called indirect fire), they had to be able to see their targets (called direct fire). While rifled artillery, as with the rifled small arms, could hurl a projectile a significantly further distance than a smoothbore cannon, Civil War soldiers would seldom see the distances that rifled cannon could fire. The smoothbore artillery was thought to be ample under most circumstances, when opposing lines were often less than a mile apart and within the effective range of smoothbore cannon. Robert E. Lee would tout the prowess of smoothbore artillery, stating "Nothing surpasses . . . the impression of a battery of 12 pound (sic) smoothbores which approaches to within 400 – 600 paces of the enemy."

Many of the visitors to Civil War battlefields question why the generals employed the tactics they selected – particularly when witnessing the scene of a disastrous attack. Many brigade, division and even corps commanders were experienced in commanding companies prior to the Civil War and were learning how to command much larger units.

Had the officers spread out their troops, so as to present a series of small targets, communications was such that the command and control by the officers would have practically disappeared. While some officers did pack men into a tight, column-like formation, and effectively pierced through opposing lines, those attacks would only work under a special and particular set of circumstances and they were not a solution for the more traditional tactics.

Maugle concluded that Civil War officers and soldiers employed the best tactics they could under the circumstances. Considering the education and experiences of these officers, the capability of the weapons, the available methods of communication and the absence of professional training, Civil War soldiers might not be expected to perform more complicated maneuvers. European observers generally viewed the American Civil War as a war of amateurs and in many ways this war was fought by volunteer soldiers who might not be expected to produce a great deal of innovation. While some individuals have called

the American Civil War the first modern war, Maugle believes that it was actually the last Napoleonic War, not the American Civil War.

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, with a dinner cost of \$32.00 for each person. Reservations should be made by telephoning 540-361-2105. Note: There was not a scheduled speaker for December 2016 and the CWRTF Speaker Program will begin again on January 25, 2017, with Dwight Hughes and his presentation, the CSS Shenandoah.



CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers **2017 Program Year**

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|----------------|---|
| JAN. 25, 2017 | DWIGHT HUGHES – <i>CSS Shenandoah</i> |
| FEB. 22, 2017 | GREG MERTZ, NPS – <i>Shiloh: Attack at Daylight and Whip Them</i> |
| MAR. 22, 2017 | FRED RAY – <i>Sharpshooter: Eugene Blackford, CSA</i> |
| APR. 26, 2017 | TERESA ROANE – Minorities in the Confederate Army |
| MAY 24, 2017 | PATRICK A. SCHROEDER, NPS - Pardons and the Amnesty Oath/Oath of Allegiance of Confederate Soldiers |
| *JUNE 21, 2017 | SHANNON. PRITCHARD – Collecting the Confederacy |
- (*This date occurs on the 3rd Wednesday during the month of June)

RVCWRT History Alert Program

RVCWRT member Alan Zirkle, provides a totally free service to all RVCWRT members notifying his many subscribers about upcoming local history events in and around the Fredericksburg area. This is done via his subscribers recorded e-mail address, concerning upcoming history-related events. To receive Alan's important messages just send an e-mail to Alan Zirkle @ az@azirkle.com.

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

To all students of the American Civil War,

On the weekend of May 6 – 7, 2017, our National Park Service, in conjunction with multiple Living Historian Organization's, 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 had occurred on this sacred ground.

Your RVCWRT membership payment is due by NLT December 31, 2016

by Bob Pfile

To date, 74 persons have renewed their membership, have you remembered to renew yours? Reminder, the new approved cost is only \$35.00 for an individual membership and \$45.00 for a family membership. The cost for a student membership is just \$7.50 each and please note; all membership payments are due by NLT the end of December 2016.

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:

President/Dinner Meetings:	Bob Jones	Webmaster:	Dan Augustine
<i>Vice President:</i>	John Sapanara	Membership:	Ryan Quint
Secretary:	Mike Burns	Research and 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
Newsletter Editor:	Jim Smithfield	Past President:	Marc Thompson

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