



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter October 2017, Volume 14, Issue 10

Speaker: Bob O'Neal
Topic: *"The Controversial Death of A Very Effective Officer"*
When: Monday, October 9, 2017
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Abstract on Bob O'Neal, our Scheduled Speaker for October 9th, 2017 By Jim Smithfield

Bob O'Neal will be our scheduled speaker for the October 9th dinner meeting. Bob is the author of the blog *"Small but Important Riots."* The following is a short bio in Bob's own words: My parents instilled a strong interest in both reading and history, and those interests led me to study the American Civil War, specifically the Union Cavalry. In recent years I have honed my interest in the cavalry to the crucial year of 1863. I have guided tours of the *Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville battlefields*, as well as several tours of Mosby's Confederacy along with Mosby historian Horace Mewborn. I have also guided tours of Indian War sites in Wyoming, Montana and Kansas for Bruce Venter and America's History, LLC. I have spoken to numerous Civil War Roundtables and am a member of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table. I am also a member of the Civil War Trust and the Mosby Heritage Area Association.

On October 9th Bob's topic will be *"The Controversial Death of A Very Effective Officer"* Bob has furnished the following synopsis: He will discuss Elon J. Farnsworth's pre-war background, and then briefly discuss his wartime experience up until June 1863. He then will explain in some detail Farnsworth's promotion from Captain to General and conclude by examining and contrasting the traditional accounts of his brigades actions on July 3, 1863, with the new theory as to why and where these actions took place.

Mercy Town: Fredericksburg, it's Wounded, and the Men and Women Who Rushed to Help

**By John Hennessy
Review of our September 2017 program by Greg Mertz**

During the three-week period in the immediate aftermath of the *Battles of the Wilderness* and *Spotsylvania Court House*, Fredericksburg became the scene of herculean efforts to relieve the suffering of the many Union wounded from those battles. Fredericksburg was appropriately called the *"City of Hospitals."* The massive rush of noncombatants to help care for the thousands

of wounded soldiers in Fredericksburg was possibly the largest mobilization for a civilian relief effort in United States history up to that time.

During the May 5 – 6, 1864, *Battle of the Wilderness*, 9,000 Union soldiers were wounded in the horrific fight. Union surgeons estimated that another 200 wounded had died in the fires that swept over the battleground, this was about 10% of the fatalities in the Wilderness. By 1864, the Union army had developed a system that had worked very well in providing the best medical care available for their wounded men. Dr. Jonathan Letterman, known as the “*Father of Modern Battlefield Medicine*” was responsible for organizing and implementing a process that saved thousands of lives during the Civil War.

Each division in the army set up a field hospital a safe distance away from the front lines. The division has three people each responsible for a particular area: medical care, food and shelter, and record keeping. The field hospital was the most recognized component of Letterman’s system, but it was just one of several stages of medical care provided for wounded soldiers.

Men who were hurt made their way on their own or on stretchers to a dressing station where wounds were bandaged so these soldiers could hopefully be stabilized for the next stage. Each soldier then made their way, typically via one of the 609 ambulances in the army. This was about one ambulance for every 150 soldiers to transport them another mile or so in the rear to the field hospital.

Three surgeons and two or three assistant surgeons, performed operations at the field hospital. Surgeons understood that the time between the wound and medical care was critical. A casual observer might think the surgeons callous, observing that each patient received an average of only eight minutes care with a doctor, but the volume of men in need of care necessitated the rapid pace. Chloroform was used for nearly all surgeries – the exception was for operations on wounds the doctors judged to be self-inflicted. While students of the Civil War have been led to believe that amputations were commonplace, just 5 to 8% of all wounded in the Fredericksburg area required that type of operation.

After the battle, when the ambulance teams had transported all wounded to the field hospitals, it was expected that the ambulances would again be put to work to take the wounded even further away to an evacuation hospital, normally a locale featuring mass transportation. The final journey was typically via train or ship to a general hospital in a major city.

Since the Union army entered into the Wilderness from its camps around Brandy Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, the medical staff planned to evacuate wounded soldiers from whence they had come. But two things occurred in the aftermath of the *Battle of the Wilderness* that caused the Union plan for the evacuation of the wounded to become obsolete.

First, as the Union army shifted east and south, the Confederate army was nearly between the Union forces and Brandy Station. Union troops had to abandon their connection with Brandy Station. Suddenly the wounded were to be evacuated through a completely different route, via Fredericksburg instead of through Brandy Station.

Then, unlike most other battles of the Civil War, the Union army left its wounded behind as they marched from the Wilderness to Spotsylvania only one day after fighting in the Wilderness concluded. As combat renewed, the army needed its ambulances to evacuate the wounded from the fighting at Spotsylvania to the division field hospitals being set up on this new battlefield. So, the second problem was that ambulances were not available to transport the wounded from the Wilderness field hospitals to the Fredericksburg evacuation hospital. The wounded were instead moved in supply wagons, lacking springs, in a bumpy, uncomfortable journey.

The doctors were also needed at the Spotsylvania field hospitals. Only 30 of the 493 surgeons in the Union army could be spared to accompany some 7,000 wounded transported from the *Wilderness to Fredericksburg*. Clara Barton came to Fredericksburg once again to help with the wounded of 1864. She had witnessed first-hand concerted efforts to care for the wounded after most battles, and concluded that the limited endeavor she observed in the aftermath of Wilderness to be gross mismanagement. Barton did not appreciate how the desertion of Brandy Station and the continuation of the campaign at Spotsylvania affected the evacuation plans and the amount of medical resources that could be allocated to the wounded from the Wilderness.

Civilian help was sorely needed in Fredericksburg. The U.S. Sanitary Commission and the U.S. Christian Commission adjusted their plans and soon shifted staff and supplies from Brandy Station to Fredericksburg. Civilians were probably mobilized in record numbers as some 500 people descended on Fredericksburg to help. They almost all provided comfort care rather than medical attention. Though only about 50 – 60 were women, they tended to write more and left us narratives full of imagery.

When the Union reinforcements passed through Fredericksburg enroute for Spotsylvania, Georgeanna Woolsey took a respite from helping the wounded to pass out flowers to men in the 8th New York Heavy Artillery, including one who promised to bring the blooms back to her. When many in that unit became casualties and indeed returned to Fredericksburg, one soldier pointed out to her that a lieutenant on a stretcher had fulfilled his promise and brought back the flowers. Woolsey wrote “I went to [his] side, hoping to help a wounded man.” However, “The Lieutenant lay dead, with a bunch of dead roses on the breast of his coat.”

While an undeniable aspect of Fredericksburg’s history were the impersonal efforts by the armies to take human life, yet another aspect of its legacy are those compassionate efforts to save lives. For every wounded soldier who died in a Fredericksburg hospital, probably twenty lived.

Thoughts from the Editor
“Saying Good-bye to Our Nation’s History”
By Jim Smithfield

Our Nation’s monuments to those men and women who fought in America’s Civil War are being threatened daily by various radical groups and individuals. These groups and individuals see our past as a personal threat to them or as a direct insult to their own standards. Obviously our country has many individuals who do not hold a reverence to our past. Thus through these individuals has begun a new and controversial era in our Nation’s History. State Flags are being changed, many of our monuments are being desecrated, while other monuments are being taken down or removed for safe keeping.

This appears to begin an era that now threatens to take away every monument or any mention of those individuals who came before. Most notably these individuals interpret any monument to or mention of those who fought for the South to be a disgrace and a personal threat to their own daily life that should be removed. Where will this end and are we to become a Nation without an accepted past history or shall we have a new sanitized history? Will future generations have access to this Nation’s actual history?

The National Park Service is resolved to preserve our Nation’s many Civil War memorials, monuments and battlefields. Additionally the Park Service is charged with educating the many visitors to our National Parks about the actions, motivations, and causes of the soldiers and states which they today commemorate. An ongoing assurance of America’s progress has always been our ability to learn from the past! So, should we now halt all learning about our Nations past in our school systems? Are we now to be expected to take away all monuments, all memorials and the many commemorations of our past hero’s or villains? Really? I sincerely hope not . . .

RVCWRT Winning Essay for 2017
By Jim Smithfield

The winner of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table 2017 National Park Service Intern Scholarship was Ms. Abigail Currier of Weare, New Hampshire. Ms. Currier, is a graduate of Gettysburg College and she will attend Indiana University - Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) this fall. She is working toward a Masters Degree in Library Sciences. She has spent the past three summers working at NPS sites in Maryland and Virginia, including this year’s work as an Interpreter at FSNMP.

This \$2,000.00 award was made available to a National Park Service (NPS) intern at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FSNMP) who had met certain educational and park service requirements in order to qualify. Ms. Currier successfully navigated through a

rigorous screening process, including the essay requirement and through a panel interview with the FSNMP Superintendent and RVCWRT Executive Committee members.

This year's essay (1,500 to 1,600 words) addressed the following topic: *The FSNMP was established in 1927, with the mission of preserving for future generations, the land and stories of the people and events associated with the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness and Spotsylvania. As a park intern, you play an important role in accomplishing this mission. With this in mind, describe how you and your division at FSNMP contributes to this mission and why it is critical for this park to be preserved for future generations.*

Our congratulations go to Abigail Currier for her fine efforts. RVCWRT wishes her every success in the future at IUPUI and beyond. RVCWRT also thanks FSNMP Superintendent Kirsten Talken-Spaulling for her cooperation and participation in this year's scholarship program.

Next month we plan to feature Ms. Currier's winning essay.

The RVCWRT Bulletin Board

By Joyce Darr

It is my job to maintain the RVCWRT's special bulletin board. This is placed against the right side wall where dinner guests enter Brock's upstairs 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 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 items may each be requested or borrowed by members to take home.

The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg

By Bob Jones

As a courtesy, the RVCWRT provides as a regular feature every 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 one meeting held on the third Wednesday of June 2017). Their Dinner Meetings are held at the MWW's Jepson Center located at 1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA, the dinner cost is \$32.00 for each person. Advance reservations should be made by telephoning 540-361-2105. As noted, their scheduled speaker for the September 27, 2017, meeting will be James R. (Bud) Robertson who will present "*Robert E. Lee and the Quest for Peace.*"



CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers

For the 2017 Program Year

Oct. 25, 2017 Eric Buckland – Mosby's Men

Nov. 15, 2017 Robert Lee Hodge – Filming the Civil War with Historical Accuracy, Part 2

An Ongoing Reminder

Please contact **Bob Jones** to order your dinner in advance and to confirm your reservations
Call Bob @ 540-399-1702 or send your e-mail to cwrtedinner@yahoo.com or bobnpeg1954@gmail.com

2017 CWRT Congress **By Dan Augustine**

On September 16, 2017, I attended a Civil War Round Table Congress in Centreville, VA. It was hosted by the Bull Run CWRT. The purpose of this meeting was initially to share ideas from some very successful round tables with all of us, in order that we may each improve and grow our round tables.

Speakers included Mike Movius from the Puget Sound CWRT, Dr. John Bamberl from the Scottesville CWRT, Wally Rueckel from the Brunswick (NC) CWRT and Jay Jorgensen from the R. E. Lee CWRT of Central New Jersey (Yes, that's right - New Jersey).

Jay spoke about CWRT Governance. I am happy to report that we (The RVCWRT) are organized the way that Jay recommended. That is, we do have a 501(c)3 corporation with an governing executive committee and a constitution.

Sue Golden from the Kernstown Battlefield Association spoke to us about Networking, Partnerships, and Fundraising. The attendees of the Congress have already started networking. Our relationship with the National Park Service should be considered a partnership since we provide the Intern Scholarship. Fundraising, I'm afraid, is not that easy. Kernstown holds fund raising events. Not something that we could easily do, except for our occasional bus tours.

Next up was Mr. John Bamberl from the Scottsdale CWRT. He told the story of how he reorganized the Scottsdale Round Table and was able to install people on their Board who were willing to work and to be cooperative. Every Board member must either chair a committee, or be a working members of at least two committees. I have a personal friend who is on the Scottsdale Board and he attests to the hard work they all put out.

Wally Rueckel did an absolutely amazing thing. He and another gentleman decided that since their nearest CWRT was about a one hour drive away, they should attempt to establish a round table closer to home. In a town with 4,000 residents that is in a county with only 5,000 residents they established a round table that today has over ONE THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED members! Some of Wally's ideas will be shared with our executive committee.

Mike Movius from the Puget Sound CWRT spoke about the importance of social media. He believes that round tables should each have a web site and a FaceBook page. This Facebook page should contain items of general interest as a method to get non-members interested. He also said that the Facebook group should point users to the web site, which should also contain items of interest to the public. Again, this was to get non-members interested. After Mike's presentation we had a Q&A panel where we were able to ask the members questions, and to share our successes with the other round tables.

Authors Note

We hope to do this every year and I look forward to it. We had 34 roundtables from all over the country, including one from Ottawa, Canada. In addition, the Civil War News, Civil War Trust, Lincoln Book Shop, and the Kernstown Battlefield Association were each in attendance.

RVCWRT History Alert Program **By Jim Smithfield**

RVCWRT member Alan Zirkle, provides a totally free service, which notifies subscribers about any/all upcoming local history events, in the Fredericksburg general area. This is done via subscribers recorded e-mail address, it concerns upcoming history-related events. RVCWRT members can receive Alan's important messages. If you do not now, but would like to receive Alan Zirkle's "*History Alerts*" then please just transmit your e-mail address to Alan noting this fact to him at az@azirkle.com.

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 Meeting:	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
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