



**THE DRUM & BUGLE**  
**Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table**  
**August 2024, Volume 21, Issue 8**

**Speaker:** Maddie Hollis  
**Topic:** “*On the Verge of Liberty*”: The Point Lookout Refugee Camp  
**When:** Monday August 12, 2024  
**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](http://www.rappvalleycivilwar.org)  
**Our Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/rvcwrt](http://www.facebook.com/rvcwrt)

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**Maddie Hollis “*On the Verge of Liberty*”: The Point Lookout Refugee Camp**

Maddie Hollis received her bachelor's degree in history and historic preservation from the University of Mary Washington in 2020. After graduating from UMW, she worked as a park ranger at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park for three years. She currently works

at the Maggie Walker National Historic Site in Richmond, Virginia. Maddie also has experience in cultural resource management.

In 1862, the U.S. government established Hammond General Hospital at Point Lookout, Maryland for the treatment of U.S. soldiers. In response, enslaved people in Maryland and Virginia began escaping to Point Lookout and developed a refugee camp on the hospital grounds. While policies that governed the treatment of enslaved refugees changed between 1861 and 1865, many of these policies did not apply to the State of Maryland. As a result, the camp's occupants faced repeated threats to their safety. How did these individuals make their voices heard? What became of the refugee camp in 1865?

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**“Our Story: The Lives and Legacy of Those Who Served in  
Battery B, First Rhode Island Light Artillery”**

**by Stephen Evangelista**

**A Review of the July 2024 Program by Greg Mertz**

Our speaker was struck with how the members of Battery B, 1<sup>st</sup> Rhode Island were ordinary, everyday people but also incredible people. Ordinary in that they had families and jobs; incredible in that they put their lives at risk for people they never met – including those of us gathered to hear this talk. Stephen Evangelista wanted us to see their humanity as well their heroism. The best way for him to demonstrate this was to give sketches of several gunners who fought at Gettysburg.

Henry Hosea Ballou had turned 18 the day before the firing on Fort Sumter. He was employed as a printer, living with his parents and three sisters. During the war, he wrote home frequently, asking his family to send him all of the typical staples that most soldiers requested, but also rum with sulfur to treat his acne, aggravated by the heat of the summer. Ballou projected that he would be home on furlough for Independence Day of 1863. He had been struck by a spent ball at the battle of Fredericksburg, where the battery dropped trail in front of the Confederate position at the stone wall, suffering horrendous casualties, losing a horse or man every two minutes for 45 minutes.

David Burlingame King was a 26-year-old farmer when he joined the battery, entrusting the farm operations to his 18-year-old, 2-months pregnant

newlywed wife Mary. The first engagement of the battery at Gettysburg was on the afternoon of July 2, 1863 along Cemetery Ridge near the Codori House.

The gunners spotted a large force to their left, moving toward them. At first, thinking they were Federal reinforcements, those troops soon let out the distinctive rebel yell. They proved to be a Confederate brigade of Georgians under Gen. Ambrose Wright. The battery fired double cannister at the Georgians, a deadly round, only fired when the enemy is dangerously close to the cannon. For the Rhode Islanders, they were too late to stop the attackers and they tried to withdraw their guns through a gap in a stone wall to their rear known as Brown's gate, named for the battery commander, Captain T. Fred Brown.

There was a bottleneck at Brown's gate, and the battery lost two of its six guns in the field. The gun crew under Sgt. Albert Aaron Straight remained in the field determined to fire one more round of double cannister before limbering up. David King was a member of Straight's team and wasn't going to budge until the gun was pulled off the field. A fellow artilleryman saw King at the trail of the cannon carriage when he observed that his comrade was struck by a bullet in his torso. King threw his arms in the air and yelled "I'm hit!" He died just a few minutes later.

Ballou, serving as the gunner of another cannon, shouted for his men to head for the rear and the gap in the stone wall when he fell. His men dragged him off to a field hospital, where he lingered for two days, dying on July 4 – the day he promised his family that he would be home on furlough. A friend of the family went to Gettysburg to retrieve the body, but it could not be located in the chaotic aftermath of the fight.

On July 3, the Confederates effectively honed in on Brown's Battery during the bombardment that proceeded Pickett's Charge, when four members of the battery would be forever linked. One artilleryman was known as William Jones, but that was not his real name, nor was he from Rhode Island. The soldier was actually named John Mahoney, a son of Irish immigrants from Boston, who may have created the alias to avoid discrimination against the Irish. Jones had a premonition and told his fellow artillerymen that he would die on July 3.

John Greene, another Irishman, was a father of four who had been wounded twice at Malvern Hill. In his letters to his wife Johanna, he wrote that if he was not home by April, she would need to see if the lease on their home could be extended.

Alfred Gray Gardner, was older than most soldiers at age 42. Born on Christmas Day, the deeply religious gunner carried a small pocket bible. As he enlisted in the battery, he left his family in the hands of God. He collected flowers, pressing them in a book and sending them in letters to his wife Adelia.

Sgt. Albert Aaron Straight was a 33-year-old with two children, who became a widower a week after his second child was born. When he joined the battery in 1861, each set of grandparents took one of the children.

On that hot afternoon, as Confederate gunners pounded the Federal center, where Brown's Battery, including Straight's gun, was posted, Gardner was ready to place a round in the muzzle of their gun, Jones stood on the other side of the gun barrel with his ramrod, while Greene had the lanyard in his hand standing near the rear of the cannon. Just then a Confederate shell, fired from an artillery piece a mile away, struck the muzzle of Straight's gun and exploded.

A shell fragment struck Jone's head, killing him and throwing his body into the air. Other fragments ripped into Gardner's side and shoulder, exposing his lung. Straight ran up to Gardner, straining to hear his final words: "Tell my wife I died happy." Gardner asked that his bible be sent to his wife and spent the last couple of minutes of his life praying. Another shell exploded, mortally wounding Greene.

Straight endeavored to load the gun, first putting the detached powder charge in the barrel and then attempting to insert a solid shot. When the shot would not slide down the barrel, someone gave Straight an axe so he might strike it and drive it past the dent in the gun, but it would not budge. The shot is permanently stuck in the cannon that would come to be known as the "Gettysburg gun," and has long been on display.

The entire battery had been pummeled and was withdrawn from Cemetery Ridge. The Confederates believed they had sufficiently weakened the Federal position after seeing several cannon withdraw – probably seeing

Brown's Battery among the retired guns – and the orders were issued for Pickett's men to begin their fateful charge.

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### **Friends of the Wilderness**

The Friends of the Wilderness are now offering tours of Payne's Farm on the Mine Run Battlefield. Fought from November 26-December 2, 1863, Mine Run is a largely forgotten campaign. The truth is the battle was, in some ways, a dress rehearsal for the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864. Take advantage of the opportunity to get an expert tour of a field many don't know exists. Information can be found at <https://www.fowb.org/post/payne-s-farms-2024-summer-hours>.

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### **Friends of Central Virginia Battlefield Trust**

As you know CVBT is a land trust. We focus on purchasing endangered battlefield properties. We do produce a large three-day annual conference, standalone events and need to interpret and maintain our lands, we need help in all of these. In the past, CVBT has had individuals from organizations assist us, and we are grateful, but now we would like to create an official volunteer group who would enjoy being part of CVBT's volunteer core.

We have created "**The Friends of CVBT.**" The intent is for this all-volunteer group is to be the "On Call" core of CVBT's volunteer group assisting in events and battlefield related needs. Active volunteer members will have the unique opportunity to be involved with events hosted by nationally acclaimed historians, assist in tours, and work on preserved battlefields. Participating volunteers will also be enrolled in the membership ranks of CVBT every year they contribute. CVBT will provide each volunteer with a CVBT volunteer staff shirt and CVBT official hat to wear at events or whenever wanted. We will be limiting this new group to 18 volunteers.

CVBT is now beginning our 27th year of preserving our local battlefields, the very battlefields you study and walk upon. We would be honored to have you join the ranks of CVBT volunteers to help us further our mission of preserving our Nation's history.

If interested please email our Executive Director **Terry Rensel** at [executivedirector@cvbt.org](mailto:executivedirector@cvbt.org) .  
Office: 540-374-0900

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## **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.cwrtof.org](http://www.cwrtof.org), and will be updated here when the schedule is released for 2025.

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### **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](http://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.

**Newsletter Editor and Webmaster:** John Roos

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### **The RVCWRT Executive Committee**

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