



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
July 2019, Volume 16, Issue 7

Speaker: Ed Bearss
Topic: "Hooker Takes Command"
When: Monday, June 10, 2019
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Edwin Cole Bearss, "Hooker Takes Command," Monday, July 8, 2019

Since the summer of 2011, our round table has sponsored the Edwin Cole Bearss internship, and for the past several July meetings, the park interns have had the opportunity to have dinner with Bearss and see why he has been called a "National Treasure." Bearss has commented that he has been fortunate to have served in the two best organizations in the Federal government: the United States Marines and the National Park Service. Bearss was a member of the 3rd Marine Raider Battalion in the Battle of Suicide Creek, New Britain in World War II. Corporal Bearss was severely wounded by Japanese machine gun fire on January 2, 1944, and spent 26 months recovering. Bearss retired as the Chief Historian of the National Park Service and has given guided tours of more military actions than any other historian ever.

Union General Joseph Hooker was the army commander who lost the Battle of Chancellorsville. Since the Confederates under Robert E. Lee were outnumbered more than two to one, Chancellorsville is often called "Lee's Greatest Victory." Though Hooker's reputation in directing a battle is poor, his ability to organize an army and develop a campaign plan was stellar. Bearss will address such contributions Hooker made to the Union army in areas such as morale, health, intelligence, cavalry organization and planning and executing a grand turning movement.

"Arlington's Little War" by Peter Vaselopulos
A Review of the June 2019 program by Greg Mertz

When Arlington County formed a Sesquicentennial of the Civil War committee, our speaker Peter Vaselopulos was pleased to serve as a part of that body. He had been aware that residents of the county had found Minnie balls on their properties and knew of a house that was said to have a cannonball embedded in its walls, but he knew little of the actions that resulted in these artifacts being deposited in area ground and buildings. He hoped that some of the others on the committee might help him learn of the military actions in the county, but found that they focused on the Arlington House – Robert E. Lee’s home – and the forts constructed during the Union occupation of the county. They asserted that no military activity occurred in the county.

That started Vaselopulos on a journey to figure out just why there were battle-related artifacts and just what happened. The result is what Vaselopulos feels tells a story of how little things can sometimes have a big impact on what will eventually happen. He discovered that for a period of months in 1861, skirmishing between the opposing forces occurred practically every day.

Arlington Mill, built by Robert E. Lee’s father-in-law, was the largest mill on the east coast. It was also the scene of an unusual skirmish on June 1, 1861. The fight occurred just one week after Virginia seceded from the Union. Union troops had been gathering in Washington, DC since the firing on Fort Sumter, and on May 24 – just one day following the secession of Virginia -- 10,000 Union forces surged over three bridges into Virginia. It was important that the Confederates not be permitted to place artillery on Arlington Heights where they could rather easily fire shells down upon Washington.

Col. Elmer Ellsworth commanding a unit known as both the 11th New York and the 1st New York Fire Zouaves, was killed in Alexandria on that first day of the invasion of Virginia when he removed a Confederate flag flying from a hotel. That same regiment would later be stationed at Arlington Mill a short time later, and it, along with the 1st Michigan, were the key Union regiments involved in the June 1st skirmish there. That night the Confederates snuck up on the Union outpost by moving along the railroad – perhaps advancing on a railroad hand car – and surprised the Union troops. The Confederates fired into the camp killing one Fire Zouave and wounding another Union soldier.

From June to October of 1861, the opposing forces were positioned on opposite sides of the Four Mile Run valley and skirmished every day. Though there was always a potential for a major battle, fighting did not break out for predominantly two reasons. The armies were awaiting equipment and even if properly armed and supplied, the troops were not ready or sufficiently trained to fight.

Many of the officers obtained a copy of *Hardee’s Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* and since the front troops furthest in advance most apt to make contact with the enemy were the skirmishers, the men in Arlington County during the first several months of the war practiced that skill extensively.

Among the things the manual covered was that the skirmish line should operate 500 yards in front of the main line and the squads of four should work together. Two men at a time would leapfrog ahead of the others with the front ranks withholding fire until the men in the rear ranks indicated their guns had been loaded so that half of their

weapons were always ready to fire. They also learned how to form a hollow square to guard against what they perceived to be their greatest threat – a cavalry attack. Another small action occurred on June 17 at Vienna, in which the first tactical use of railroads occurred in the Civil War. Some 274 men of the 1st Ohio were being transported by train when about 750 Confederates set up an ambush. Except for the few Union forces that were killed or wounded, the Ohio troops escaped into the woods, but had to retreat on foot when the engineer took off with the train.

Though the troops were not ready to fight in July of 1861, Lincoln was under pressure to do something and Union troops marched out toward Manassas Junction and fought the Battle of Bull Run, skedaddling into Arlington in the disastrous retreat. George B. McClellan was then placed in command of the forces in the aftermath of Bull Run. The value on training and retaining proficient troops resulted in a change in the primary terms of enlistment for soldiers from 90 days to three years. McClellan's mission was to build defenses for Washington and train the troops. Many of the 22 fortifications in Arlington were constructed during this period of McClellan's leadership.

The largest action taking place in Arlington was the August 27, 1861 Battle of Bailey's Crossroads. Confederate leaders James Longstreet and J.E.B. Stuart with 500 men in a flanking movement surprised a couple hundred militiamen of the 23rd New York and took Munson Hill. The Confederate flag flown from atop the hill could be very plainly seen by Union troops in Washington in a taunting manner.

Thaddeus Lowe ascended a balloon to make an aerial reconnaissance of the Confederate strength at Munson Hill. The Confederates shot at the balloon and otherwise did a good job of concealing their strength. By the end of September, 1861, McClellan's willingness to engage the Confederates had increased, and both sides tried to ambush each other. Because some Union soldiers wore gray uniforms, some night skirmishing resulted in a friendly fire incident in which five were killed and fifteen were wounded. Confederate troops abandoned Munson Hill and when the Union troops in turn occupied it, they discovered a wooden Quaker gun and scarecrows in the fortifications as a decoy.

Even though Vaseopoulos had originally been told that there was no military activity in Arlington, he discovered several interesting actions and nearly continuous skirmishing over the first several months of the war.

RVCWRT ART PRINT RAFFLE

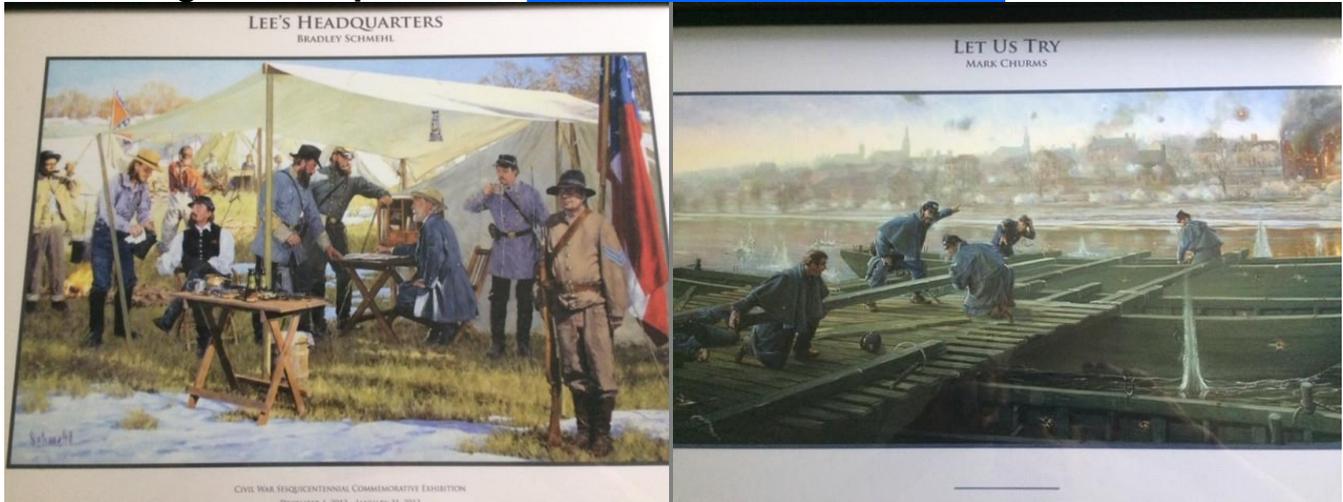
RVCWRT is raffling off two professionally framed and matted Civil War prints, "Let Us Try" by Mark Churms and "Lee's Headquarters" by Bradley Schmehl. Each measures 18 ½" x 26 ½" including frame. These prints are from the 2012 Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemorative Exhibition at the Fredericksburg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



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"

2019 NPS Intern Scholarship

The Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table (RVCWRT) provides a \$2,000 scholarship to a National Park Service (NPS) intern serving at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park. Under the provisions of this scholarship program, an intern will be defined as any individual who is, or will be, an undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited college or university; who has served at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park (beginning their service between July 2018 and July 2019) and who has completed a minimum of 350 hours of service to the park in good standing. For complete details, go to the website, www.rvcwrt.org

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

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