



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
October 2018, Volume 15, Issue 10

Speaker: Daniel Davis
Topic: "The Rock Hurler: George Crook and the Battle of Fisher's Hill"
When: Monday, October 8, 2018
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

Daniel Davis – "The Rock Hurler: George Crook and the Battle of Fisher's Hill"

Our program on Monday October 8, 2018 features Daniel Davis speaking on "The Rock Hurler: George Crook, the Army of West Virginia and the Battle of Fisher's Hill."

The presentation focuses on Union Major General George Crook's role in the Battle of Fisher's Hill, fought near Strasburg, Virginia in September 1864. Better known for his campaigns against the American Indians after the Civil War, Crook played a major role in this Union victory. Dan will discuss the colorful Crook's military background, the events leading up to the battle and its controversial aftermath. He will also examine efforts to minimize Crook's contributions by other officers, and place these contributions in their proper context.

"Distinguished Gallantry – Medal of Honor Stories from Area Battlefields" by Peter Maugle
A Review of the September 2018 Program by Greg Mertz

Prior to the Civil War, the United States military basically had no formal medals or awards. Though establishing a medal for men in service was discussed in 1861, it did not proceed because of opposition from General-in-Chief Winfield Scott who "*felt that medals and decorations smacked of European privilege and affectation.*" But when Scott retired in November, 1861, dialogue of such an honor renewed. The Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles was able to establish the award first, and with Lincoln's signature on December 21, 1861 the Medal of Honor was created. The army followed suit in February, 1862.

Secretary of War Edwin Stanton personally awarded the first six Medals of Honor on March 25, 1863 to some of the men known as Andrews Raiders, who had captured a train and attempted to destroy bridges and rails between Atlanta and Chattanooga. Many of the recipients of the Medal of Honor

was for deeds associated with battle flags, whether saving their own unit's flag, or capturing a flag of the enemy. Returning to Union lines with a captured Confederate flag practically guaranteed a soldier the Medal of Honor, irrespective of just how the soldier happened to procure it.

Most Medals of Honor were not awarded during the war, but in the 1890s. For example, of the 131 Medals of Honor issued to soldiers who fought on Fredericksburg area battlefields, only nineteen were presented while the Civil War was still being fought. The post-war awarding of the medal became so rampant in fact, that additional standards were applied and in 1916 a board was established to scrutinize the validity of the medals that had been awarded. After examining all 2,625 Medals of Honor awarded by the army, 911 were rescinded in 1917.

One of the most appropriate of the retractions was for the 864 men of the 27th Maine whose deeds for receiving the honor was simply to reenlist. Another annulment was the medal given to Lt. Col. Asa Bird Gardiner, who got it in 1872 for simply writing: *"I understand there are a number of bronze medals for distribution to soldiers of the late war, and request I be allowed one as a souvenir of memorable times past."* Dr. Mary Walker, whose service included tending to soldiers at Chatham following the Battle of Fredericksburg, had her medal revoked because, *"This was a contract surgeon whose service does not appear to have been distinguished in action or otherwise."* Walker refused to return her medal and continued to wear it proudly. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter officially restored her Medal of Honor.

Even though some of the Medals of Honor that had been issued did not meet the standard for which the medal was intended, the board did not take pleasure in rescinding the award. They reported, *"In this connection the board ventures to suggest that other insignia, in addition to the medal of honor, be established by Congress to be awarded for distinguished or highly meritorious services, not only in action but also in other spheres of duty."* The result was the establishment of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, and the Bronze Star, established between 1918 and 1944.

To date, 3,519 Medals of Honor have been awarded – 1,522 for deeds performed during the Civil War. Of the 131 awarded for actions in the Fredericksburg area, Private Archibald Freeman of the 124th New York, who received his medal for service at Spotsylvania at the age of sixteen, was the youngest. Brigadier General John Robinson, who also received his medal for service at Spotsylvania, was both the highest ranking and the oldest at age 47.

Among the twenty Medal of Honors awarded for service during the Battle of Fredericksburg, was Lieut. Evan Woodward, of the 2nd Pennsylvania Reserves. Woodward ordered several companies in his regiment to wheel toward the exposed Confederate flank and toward the cannon massed on Prospect Hill. This portion of the reserves soon found themselves on the flank and in rear of the unsuspecting 19th Georgia, and opened fire. The Georgians were caught in a crossfire, with some of the bullets fired from Union soldiers in front of the Confederates striking Woodward's men behind the Confederates. Woodward sprang to action, dashing into the Confederate trench and getting them to surrender and capturing a battle flag – the sole banner captured by the entire Union army in the otherwise disastrous Battle of Fredericksburg.

But the story of this Medal of Honor did not end with Woodward's seizure of the flag. As an officer providing critical leadership at a critical moment of the battle, he felt he could not leave the battlefield, so he entrusted the flag to a private instructed to take the flag to the rear. That private was wounded, and another soldier named Jacob Cart picked up the flag, turned it in, and also received the Medal of Honor – so two medals were awarded for the capture of the same flag!

During the Chancellorsville Campaign, 41 Medals of Honor were bestowed, including one to Private John F. Chase of the 5th Maine Light Artillery, stationed at the Chancellorsville Inn during the morning of May 3, 1863. As shot and shell pounded the battery, five of the six guns fell silent and Chase was one of a two-person team that kept the final gun firing. With the help of the Irish Brigade, they pulled that last gun to the rear via the prolonge rope, and then Chase returned to the front to carry the badly

wounded acting battery commander Lieut. Edmund Kirby from the field. His Medal of Honor was donated to the park on the 146th anniversary of the battle.

The Battle of the Wilderness was the scene of deeds of bravery leading to 23 Medals of Honor. Lt. John H. Patterson, of the 11th United States Infantry, received his medal because of his actions during the infamous fires that broke out during that battle, when he "*picked up and carried several hundred yards to a place of safety a wounded officer of his regiment who was helpless and would otherwise have been burned in the forest.*" His medal is also in the possession of the park and on display.

The Battle of Spotsylvania was the setting for more Medals of Honor than any of the other three battles in the park – a total of 47. Of that number, 22 were awarded for gallantry during the initial attack on the Mule Shoe salient on the morning of May 12, 1864. Maugle concluded that this first hour of the assault represented "*the most concentrated period of Medal of Honor actions performed in American military history.*" All 22 medals were presented for the performance of the same type of deed – the capture of a Confederate battle flag. At least one recipient, Private Francis Bishop, of the 57th Pennsylvania, acknowledged that flags were simply there and he took one, stating, "*I did not realize at the time that there was any particular honor gained.*"

Maugle concluded by pointing out that the standards for receiving the Medal of Honor today are significantly different than they were during the Civil War, asking the round table members to consider whether the Civil War recipients are less deserved of the award than those upon whom the honor has been bestowed in modern times.

Greg Mertz Honored with the Emerging Civil War Stevenson Award

The Emerging Civil War (ECW) has chosen RVCWRT Scribe and founding president, Greg Mertz, as the recipient of the 2018 Thomas Greeley Stevenson Award. This award is presented annually to an individual (or organization) that has made a significant contribution to ECW's success.

Greg Mertz has worked for the NPS for 37 years, and as a supervisory historian at FSNMP for more than two decades.

The award is named after Brigadier General Thomas Greeley Stevenson, Union IX Corps Division Commander, killed at Spotsylvania Courthouse in May 1864.

A FREE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE FULL NORTH ANNA BATTLEFIELD Wednesday, September 26, 2018, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Battle at North Anna River was fought May 23 - 26, 1864 just after the Battle at Spotsylvania Courthouse and just before the Battle of Cold Harbor during General Grant's Overland Campaign. This engagement has not garnered as much attention as those two battles because it wasn't a "blood bath," but it was a big opportunity lost for Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia because they had at least two of Grant's Army Corps in serious peril and let them get away.

The Battle of North Anna River was fought basically at three separate locations about six miles apart along the shores of the river. For many years, this battlefield has been inaccessible to the general public but that started to change some years ago when Hanover County and the Martin Marietta Company reached two separate agreements a few years apart to set aside 180 acres of land next to Martin Marietta's Doswell quarry for the County to establish a Civil War Park covering the Ox Ford portion of the battle. This left the other two main areas of the battlefield (Jericho Mills, Telegraph Road & Henagan's Redoubt) still in private hands.

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That changed in 2014 when the Civil War Trust (now the American Battlefield Trust) purchased 654 acres of land at the Jericho Mills site. The purchase agreement allowed the previous owner to lease property as a working farm, so for the time being public access is only by special arrangement with the Richmond National Battlefield Park. Just recently, the Civil War Trust purchased 125 acres along the Telegraph Road (US Route 1) portion of the battlefield south of the river.

We have been given a unique opportunity by the Richmond National Battlefield Park to take a group tour of the whole battlefield led by Bob Stone, a local Civil War instructor, speaker, and tour guide (and Lake of the Woods resident). Bob cautions that this tour will involve a large amount of walking (around 5 miles total) over uneven ground, and that it is not accessible at this time for handicapped individuals. Transportation will be by shared rides in a car caravan (4 per car), and the total group size will not exceed 24 people. The cars will leave from the Lake of the Woods lower parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Everyone is responsible for bringing their own lunch, snacks and drinks. There is a picnic grounds at the Ox Ford Park.

If you are interested in taking this tour, please call Bob Stone at 540-388-2880 to get more information, or to get on the list, and to let him know if you are willing to drive three additional people. Registration is first-come, first-served until the 24 slots are filled. There will be no charges for the tour guide or the battlefield visit. The only expenses will be the provision of your own bag or picnic lunch and the cost of driving for those that drive their car in the caravan. It is recommended that each person riding in someone else's car pay that individual \$10 to help cover the car expenses.



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 cwrtdinner@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 2018 and 2019 Program Year:

October 24, 2018	Gordon Rhea	"The Generalship of Lee and Grant in the Overland Campaign"
November 14, 2018	Richard Lewis	"Confederate Generals"

		Uniforms"
January 23, 2019	Robert Dunkerly	"Civil War Railroads"
February 27, 2019	Dr. Bradley Gottfried	"Maps of the Battle of Fredericksburg"
March 27, 2019	Bob O'Connor	"James Hanger and the Hanger Company"
April 24, 2019	Mark Tooley	"The 1861 Peace Conference"
May 22, 2019	Patrick Schroeder, NPS	"Zouaves: America's Forgotten Soldiers"
June 19, 2019	Dave Bastion	"The Vicksburg Canal"
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"

Letter to RT Membership

This letter (in part) was received from Abbi Smithmyer, an NPS summer intern: "I wanted to express my sincere appreciation for what your organization does and accomplishes. I think what you offer is crucial to sustaining interests in your area and the Civil War in general. Thank you for helping to make my summer so enjoyable".

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:	Robin Donato
Assistant Treasurer:	Ben Keller	Member at Large:	Barbara Stafford
Meeting Scribe:	Greg Mertz	Media & Events Coordinator:	Paul Steir
Membership Chair:	Paul Steir	Past President:	Marc Thompson
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:	Dan Augustine		

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