



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
October 2026, Volume 23, Issue 10

Speaker: George Washington Foundation Archaeology Team
Topic: "Excavating Civil War Camp Life"
When: October 12, 2026
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
Our Facebook: www.facebook.com/rvcwrt

George Washington Foundation Archaeology Team "Excavating Civil War Camp Life"

Ferry Farm is most well-known as the Boyhood home of George Washington. While our primary emphasis of interpretation and research has focused on young George and his family's life on this farm, Ferry Farm has many other stories to tell. The American Civil War had a major impact on the Ferry Farm community, changing both the landscape and the lives of those who lived

here. The Washington house and its outbuildings gradually fell into disrepair until by the mid-1830s there was no trace of them on the landscape. But the soldiers still knew the significance of the site. In April 1862, the Civil War came full force to Fredericksburg and to Ferry Farm. Federal Forces took over and occupied the City of Fredericksburg behind the retreating Confederate Army. Encampments and gun emplacements were established all along our side of the river and throughout Stafford County as the army set about maintaining control of the city across the river. Engineers were set to the task of rebuilding the railroad bridge and erecting pontoon bridges, including one at the end of Ferry Road.

Ms Jobrack been involved with the Ferry Farm Archaeology Department since 2012, when her youngest twins graduated from high school. She started out as a volunteer but then took on a part-time position cataloguing artifacts from the summer digs, which then turned into a full-time job as a lab assistant. She has been co-field director since 2019. She has a BA in Anthropology and an MA in Historical Archaeology, with past jobs in cultural resource management and historic sites, such as Mount Vernon. Though she really enjoys pulling out the handfuls of wine bottle necks and bases, she does find it more awe-inspiring when they pick out the tiniest and fragile eggshell fragments among the rubble and debris inside the kitchen cellar.

**“The Invincible 12th South Carolina”
by Sarah Bierle**

A Review of the September 2026 Program by Greg Mertz

While I was unable to hear our September program, several online videos feature our speaker, Benjamin Cwayna. In lieu of the standard program review, to follow are notes from a pair of online interviews with Cwayna -- one overview of his book and one on the 12th South Carolina at Gettysburg -- as well as a talk on Gregg’s Brigade in the Sharpsburg Campaign.

Cwayna is from Michigan, where he belonged to a living history unit that portrayed both the Federal 4th Michigan and the Confederate 12th South Carolina regiments. One of the members of the living history unit had an ancestor in the 12th South Carolina. Cwayna spent about sixteen years

researching and writing his book, noting that newspapers proved to be a “gold mine” for him.

The regiment was recognized during the war as an excellent unit. Confederate artillerist E.P. Alexander credited the 12th South Carolina with having the reputation of an exemplary regiment both when on the march and in battle. Other regiments within the Gregg/McGowan Brigade admitted that they were not as well drilled as the 12th South Carolina.

Cwayna attributed their discipline to their consummate leadership. Although their initial commanding officer, Col. R.G. Mills Dunovant, was a politician who was not a very good officer, his tenure with the unit was short-lived. But their next commander, Col. Dixon Barnes, though also a politician, was an aggressive officer who drilled the men incessantly. After Barnes was mortally wounded at Sharpsburg, his successors continued following his model for drill and discipline and the regiment’s excellence was perpetuated.

The 12th South Carolina particularly distinguished themselves in three battles, with Spotsylvania Court House leading the list. The regiment was assigned to what was arguably the most horrific position held on any battlefield of the entire war when they were sent to the aptly named Bloody Angle on May 12, 1864. The 12th South Carolina fought for 18 hours in the midst of the most intense close-quarter fighting of the conflict. The close-range infantry fire from the Federal forces was so severe that bullets shredded the bodies of men who fell on top of the earthworks and bullets even chipped away at a 22-inch oak tree that fell near the flank of the 12th South Carolina.

The next most prominent battle for the regiment was at Second Manassas. Occupying the left flank of Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s command, the regiment repulsed several Federal assaults on August 29-30, 1862.

The third battle in which the 12th South Carolina was conspicuous was at Sharpsburg or Antietam, on September 17, 1862. While still serving under Jackson, the brigade was part of Gen. A.P. Hill’s division, which made a 17-mile march from Harper’s Ferry and arrived at Sharpsburg just in time to save Lee’s army. The 12th South Carolina made three separate charges against Federal Gen. Ambrose Burnside’s troops, and Cwayna credited the regiment with initiating the momentum that drove the Federal forces back.

When asked in an interview if he could share an example from the regiment that epitomized the brutality of the Civil War, Cwayna cited the experiences of Lieut. John R. Boyles in the battle of Gettysburg and its aftermath. Boyles had been a sergeant but was elected to become an officer with the rank of lieutenant in Company C. One of his men, however, had a particularly strong dislike of Boyles, delaying his furlough and the opportunity to visit home so he could be in camp during the elections and could vote in opposition to Boyles. By the time of the Pennsylvania Campaign, the 12th South Carolina were in a brigade commanded by the senior colonel, Abner Perrin, in a new division commanded by Gen. William Dorsey Pender and in the new Third Corps under Gen. A. P. Hill.

Pender's division followed about a half mile behind the lead division of Hill's corps, under Gen. Henry Heth, as the Confederates approached Gettysburg from the West on July 1, 1863. Heth's men weakened the troops of the Federal I Corps confronting them, and then when Pender's division passed to the front, his men were able to scatter the worn down Federals. Perrin's brigade advanced into a gap in the Federal line, driving the blue clad soldiers on their left to the east through the Seminary grounds and into the town, while the Federals to his right were pushed further south, beyond the Fairfield Road. The 12th South Carolina opposed the 151st Pennsylvania in the open fields to the south of Herbst's Woods and the McPherson Farm buildings.

During this phase of the battle, Lieut. Boyles's leg was mangled by a shell. His men located some poles and a blanket, fashioning them into a make-shift stretcher, and carried him to the rear. When they crossed Willoughby Run, he begged his men to lay him in the stream to cool down on the hot, humid July day. Boyles noted that the stream ran red with his blood.

When they reached the field hospital, Boyle was concerned about his treatment. He did not want the regimental surgeon, a drunkard named Dr. W. H. Bailey, to be the one to perform the amputation of his leg. He implored the brigade surgeon, Dr. Thomas A. Evans, to perform the operation instead. Two days later, Boyles came to from the effects of the chloroform only to discover that Bailey was the surgeon who had taken off his leg. The job was botched, requiring a second amputation and leaving his leg in such a condition that he could not be fitted for a prosthetic limb. He spent the rest of his life getting around on crutches.

The regiment has not been recognized as one of the elite units of the war. Perhaps it is because they do not have a famous sobriquet, like the Louisiana Tigers, the Texas Brigade or the “Stonewall” Brigade. Cwayna also thought that one reason was that the men had simple virtues, a toughness to see the war to the end, and rather than tout their qualities, they were content with allowing their work to speak for itself.

Mort Kunstler

Due to not feeling well, I was not able to make it to the Septmeber meeting. We will try this again. The Roos family is purging. Specifically, we are downsizing because we are moving out to Culpeper. While we do have plenty of all space in the house we are building, we have accounted for everything we have already hung. While going through stuff, I found my father’s print of “Review at Moss Neck” by Mort Kunstler. I am not sure if we will raffle it, or auction it, regardless, I want it to go to someone that will be able to frame it and enjoy it in their home. Be on the lookout for it at the next meeting.

Important Information about the Park’s Buildings

At this time, both Chatham Manor and the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Centers remain closed. The grounds are open, with park staff manning the bookstore in Fredericksburg, and offering talks at Chatham. Recent information looks like Chatham will reopen at some time in July, with the visitor center being later in the summer. We will keep you updated as information come into us. Chancellorsville is open, and Elwood will be opening up for the season in May.

To explore these locations independently, check out the self-guided audio tours of the Sunken Road and Chatham available on the NPS App and online at [go.nps.gov/frsp-tours](https://www.nps.gov/frsp-tours). Park staff look forward to welcoming visitors to our upgraded facilities in spring and summer 2026!

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.

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 .
Office: 540-374-0900

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.cwrtf.org, and will be updated here. Below is the schedule starting in September 2026 and going to June 2027.

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. 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.

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