



# THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

## Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter

August 2015, Volume 12, Issue 8

**Speaker:** Robert M. Dunkerly  
**Topic:** "Surrenders of the Confederacy"  
**When:** Monday, August 10, 2015  
**Location:** Brock's Riverside Grill  
**Times:** Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm

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### **Abstract on Robert M. Dunkerly, our Scheduled Speaker for Monday, August 10, 2015**

By Jim Smithfield

Our speaker on August 10, 2015, will be Robert M. Dunkerly. He is a historian, an award-winning author, and a speaker who's actively involved in Civil War historic preservation and research. Dunkerly holds a degree in History from St. Vincent College and a Masters in Historic Preservation from Middle Tennessee State University. He has worked at nine historic sites, written seven books and over twenty articles. His research includes archaeology, colonial life, military history, and historic commemoration. Dunkerly currently works as a Park Ranger at *Richmond National Battlefield Park*. He has visited over 400 battlefields and over 700 historic sites worldwide. When not reading or writing, he enjoys hiking, camping, and photography.

Mr. Dunkerly's talk on August 10th is titled, "*Surrenders of the Confederacy*." Most of us know about the surrenders at Appomattox and Bennett Place, but the Civil War lingered on far longer in other states. Dunkerly, will discuss the lesser known Confederate surrenders and negotiations in Alabama, Texas, Arkansas, and in the Indian Territory. Some surrenders went smoothly, others were fraught with drama and tension. All had amazing twists and turns. The closing of the war was far more dramatic, complicated, and confusing than is generally thought today. Appomattox was just the beginning of the end, not the end . . .

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### **"Reassessing Stories of the Civil War" -- An Evening with Ed Bearss**

Review of the July, 2015 Program by Greg Mertz

At 92 years young, Ed Bearss was our guest for a special fund-raising evening in his name and the introduction of John Launius. Launius is the recipient of the round table sponsored *Edwin Cole Bearss Intern Award* at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. During the evening, Ed shared with us some thoughts on things related to the Civil War that may be different than what we believe them to be. We might think that the establishment of a park is something that is

rather straightforward with a specified way of doing things. However, Ed pointed out the very unorthodox path of one of the last Civil War parks. The public habitually learns much of their history through movies, but that format often produces glaring misconceptions. Ed pointed out issues with two of the more recent efforts by Hollywood to portray Civil War history. Then, in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Civil War, Ed shared with us some little known aspects of the final grand campaign of the war, i.e., from the *Battle of the Wilderness* to the end at *Appomattox Court House*.

All of us know in general the way in which our Congress works, but what we may not appreciate is that although Congress may authorize the creation of a national park unit, there is nothing requiring an expenditure of money to proceed unless there is also a corresponding appropriation of money. After Congress authorized *Pea Ridge National Military Park* in Arkansas, in 1956, the appropriation committee tacked on a couple of stipulations regarding the funding for the park. These congressmen decided that Pea Ridge could not become a park until a boundary was established and until the state of Arkansas purchased the land. The local supporters for the park figured that it would be easy to acquire the necessary land. They envisioned two tracts of land 2 ½ miles apart totaling 75 acres. Imagine their shock when the *National Park Service* drew a boundary of some 4,200 acres. The establishment of a national park often entails interesting twists and turns of which many visitors are unaware.

Unfortunately many people learn much of their history through Hollywood films. The first part of the movie "*Gettysburg*" dealt a great deal with Federal cavalry division commander, John Buford and his stand on the first day of the *Battle of Gettysburg*. According to the movie, a significant reason for Buford's success was because his men were armed with the seven-shot, breach-loading Spencer weapons, whereas the Confederate infantry they faced had single-shot, muzzle-loading muskets. Buford's men were actually armed with breach-loading carbines which had a greater rate of fire than did muzzle-loading guns, however, they did not have the more advanced Spencers. The makers of the movie got their information regarding Buford's ordnance from famed Civil War author Shelby Foote, who got his evidence from a secondary source. Ed had commented at the time that Foote didn't spend enough time in the National Archives to discover that Buford had no Spencers. The only unit to have Spencers at Gettysburg was Custer's cavalry brigade which had been issued Spencer rifles, and they were not engaged on the first day of the *Battle of Gettysburg*.

The movie goers who watched "*Glory*" were led to believe that the first African-American troops to be mustered into service were those who joined the 54th Massachusetts. The 54th was formed in the spring of 1863. Viewers also got the impression that the first battle involving black troops was the assault by the 54th Massachusetts on Battery Wagner on Morris Island, near Charleston, South Carolina, on July 18, 1863. In fact the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry was mustered into service in October, 1862 and they saw their first engagement in the *Battle of Island Mound*, in Missouri, on October 28, 1862. The 1st Kansas Colored Infantry further distinguished itself in the *Battle of Honey Springs*, fought in the Indian Territory on July 17, 1863, ironically one day before the 54th Massachusetts launched their famous attack on Battery Wagner.

During his presentation, Ed also examined some of the myths and little known aspects of the Civil War's last grand campaign running from the Wilderness through Appomattox. Mention of Cold Harbor attracts connotations of disaster and unprecedented bloodshed. On June 3, 1864 Federal forces lost 5,300 men at Cold Harbor, while the Confederates suffered only 1,000 casualties. Though many believe that the fighting at Cold Harbor represents the bloodiest day of the 1864 Overland Campaign, Ed declared that the distinction actually belongs to the date of June 18, 1864 at Petersburg. On this day yet another Federal disaster occurred. Again, as at Cold Harbor, the Confederates had once again constructed formidable earthworks and the Federal V Corps was reluctant to attack. One of the V Corps officers to be desperately wounded that day was Major General Joshua L. Chamberlain. Some of the new troops recently sent to the army from the defenses around Washington tried their best to take the Confederate position and they suffered the heaviest loss of any regiment in a single engagement of the entire Civil War. This distinction belongs

to the 632 men from the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery who fell on June 18, 1864 at Petersburg – a day in which even more soldiers fell than at the more famous *Battle of Cold Harbor*.

Among the lesser known facets of the Appomattox Campaign is the role of William T. Sherman. Phillip H. Sheridan and Sherman had been in communication with each other after Sherman's victory at Bentonville, NC in March 1865. They had proposed that Sheridan link up with Sherman and together they would clear Lee out of the Petersburg area. Lincoln opposed this move for obvious political reasons. Lincoln believed that after the Federal Army of the Potomac had toiled with the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia for years, and he felt the need for that army, made up of predominantly men of New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, to have the key role in defeating Lee. If Sherman's army group, principally comprised of troops from the Midwest, played an important part in destroying Lee's army or forcing its surrender, the western states would have too much influence in post-war politics. Sheridan was told that he could not unite with Sherman, but must support the army group with Grant, including the Army of the Potomac, in defeating Lee. Sherman was ordered to hold fast at Goldsboro, North Carolina until April 11. Lee met with Grant to surrender his army at Appomattox in Wilbur McClain's parlor on April 9 – two days before the weight of Sherman's forces would have been added to the campaign in Virginia.

Ed mixed in some other stories that he felt would be of interest to our group, in addition to telling us of these various myths of the Civil War and of little known yet important aspects of the last year of the war. This iconic, admired and very respected historian who has arguably done more for America's Civil War public history than anyone else who has ever lived was appropriately given a standing ovation when he had concluded his remarks for the evening . . .

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### **Did you know . . .**

**By Jim Smithfield**

that . . . Our July speaker Mr. Edwin Cole Bearss has been nominated to receive the Congressional Gold Metal . . .

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### **Remember: Contact Bob Jones to order your Dinner in advance**

To Confirm Your Reservations; Telephone 540-399-1702 or e-mail [3dognight@Bigplanet.Com](mailto:3dognight@Bigplanet.Com)

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### **RVCWRT History Alert Program**

**By Jim Smithfield**

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

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### **Did You know . . .**

**By Jim Smithfield**

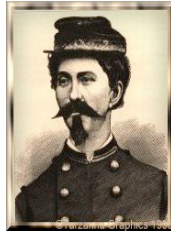
that . . . Loretta Janeta Velazquez, highlighted in following article was not the only Hispanic woman who had risked her life to stand with the Confederate South? The fact is that others such as Lola Sanchez and her two sisters, Panchita and Eugenia, risked their lives to warn Confederate troops at *Camp Davis in Florida*, of a pending Union early morning attack. This they had overheard from three Union officers being entertained by them in their home. Lola single handed made a desperate night ride through the swamp to warn Camp Davis. The Confederates were dully warned and the Union

troops did attack the next day. However, the Union troops were soundly defeated that day. In 1909, the Daughters of the Confederacy met and recognized the three sister's service to the Confederacy, along with the heroism of their actions . . .

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## **Loretta Janeta Velazquez, AKA Lt. Harry Buford**

By Jim Smithfield



**Loretta as Lt. Harry Buford**



**From youth to old age**

Many Hispanic women are today recognized as having made many contributions to the "Cause", i.e., the Confederacy! In fact, Hispanic women soldiers were also represented among the Confederate rank and file of their armies. One such woman who posed as a soldier was Cuban born Loretta Janeta Velazquez, she was the granddaughter and legal heir to the fortune of renowned Spanish portrait artist Diego Velasquez. Loretta is today considered by many historians to be possibly one of the Civil Wars most famous female soldiers and she has been portrayed on the History Channel . . .

Little is known about Loretta's early childhood, however, much of her later life has today been verified! Some of this has been done through her book about her life, entitled "*The Woman in battle: A Narrative of The Adventures and Travels of Madame Loretta Janeta Velazquez, Otherwise Known as Lieutenant Harry T. Buford.*" Some of the various facts that have been verified include, that she was born June 26, 1842, and that she was from a very wealthy family, also that she was sent to school in New Orleans and there at the age of fourteen, she ran away with a U.S. Army Officer from Texas. Then, when Texas seceded from the Union, her then husband resigned his commission from the United States Army.

It was 1856, when Loretta married her Texas born Army Officer and the happy couple decided to move to New Orleans, LA. The couple had three children, however, each of the children died. When the Civil War began, her husband of course cast his loyalty with Texas and thus South, joining the Confederate army.

After his regiment moved out to Florida, Loretta chose to follow. It was about at this time, that Loretta determined that she would fight for the South. Moving to Arkansas, for a short time, where Loretta raised a regiment of troops. Loretta, then marched them to Florida, and there she presented her husband with her troops. However, shortly after Loretta arrived, in an accident of battle, her husband's weapon misfired killing him. At this point Loretta, became even more determined then, deciding that she would take his place. Loretta then began to develop her disguise to appear as a man. She, next assumed the name and rank of Lt. Harry T. Buford, Loretta disguised herself and

thus her sex . . .

In her book, Loretta tells of her participation in the fighting at Balls Bluff, First Manassas, Fort Donnellson and at Shiloh. Loretta, in joining the Confederate Army began her career as a soldier. She claims that masquerading as an officer assured her of more than a certain amount of privacy. However, when her identity was unmasked, she was fined for acting as a man and discharged from the Confederate army. She then went North to Washington, D.C., she was wearing female attire to gather intelligence for the South. Upon her return to the South, she was made a member of the Confederate Detective Corp.

A short time after her adventures in espionage, Loretta traveled to Tennessee. There, she again managed to join the Confederate Army, this was on February 11, 1862, and once again she fought as a man. This time it was in the battles of Fort Donnellson and Shiloh. Yet, here again her identity, was once more unmasked. This occurred when upon being treated for a wound in her foot, which she received while on burial detail. This was her second time being discovered, accordingly Loretta, once again unwillingly ended her military career. She fled back to her home in New Orleans. However, there she once again worked as a Confederate spy, doing so throughout the remainder of the Civil War. Loretta, claimed in her book to have gathered much useful information while working as a Confederate spy.

After the war, Loretta wrote her book revealing her life as a Confederate officer and spy. This book, highlighted her short career in the Confederate Army! As previously noted, she called her book, "*The Woman in Battle . . .*" Loretta published her book in 1876, in it she placed a notation by her picture, that she made a more handsome man than most of the men whom she knew during her brief time in the Confederate military service.

During the Civil War in cases where women were found out as soldiers, there does not seem to actually be much tumult about it. More or less, most times in these situations these women were just sent home. Yet, when they were found out, often it was during necessary medical treatment; i.e., they were injured or sick with dysentery/diarrhea. In camp, among others and in close quarters, there was little knowledge about bacterial infection and in close quarters there wasn't much chance to prevent it. Some documentation shows that some soldiers found to be women were briefly imprisoned or they were fined. In one letter from a female prisoner, who had disguised herself as a man to be a soldier, she stated that three other women were in the prison with her for the same offense and that one woman had actually posed as a major in the Army . . .

Loretta states that she traveled freely through both the North and the South, working in both her male and female disguises, as necessary. It was at this point in time in the final year of the war that Loretta met and married Confederate Captain Thomas DeCaulp. However, DeCaulp died or was killed a short time later. After the Civil War, Loretta married a man identified only to history as Major Wasson. After their marriage, the couple immigrated to Venezuela. Shortly after their marriage, however, her husband died in Venezuela. Loretta then moved back to the United States, where she traveled extensively throughout the Western States. It was during this time that Loretta gave birth to a baby boy. In her attempt to raise her son, she found that she desperately needed money and the writing and sales from her book gave this to her . . .

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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. Each month, The Drum and Bugle newsletter is also placed on our web-site, [www.RVCWRT.org](http://www.RVCWRT.org). Yearly membership dues are still just \$30.00 for individuals, \$40.00 for families, and it's still 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:

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