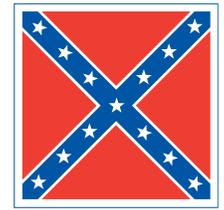


# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVII, Number 3

Chicago, Illinois

November, 2006



## 655th REGULAR MEETING

BOB O'NEILL

ON

LEARNING TO LEAD: P.S.G. COOKE, JOHN BUFORD, WESLEY MERRITT, ALFRED PLEASANTON AND GEORGE CUSTER

\*\*\*\*\*

Friday, Nov. 10

\*\*\*\*\*

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA  
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$30 - Members/Non-members

Entrée:

Chicken Trevino

Catch of the Day

Vegetarian Plate

or Fruit Plate

### PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by MONDAY, Nov. 6, by calling 630-460-1865. We now also have our online dinner reservation system at <http://www.thecwrt.org/commiss.htm>. Reservations made after Wednesday, Nov. 8, will be surcharged \$5.

People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of \$5 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$8 with a validated parking sticker.

Bob O'Neill

- on -

“Learning to Lead: P.S.G. Cooke, John Buford, Wesley Merritt, Alfred Pleasanton and George Custer”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

The Union cavalry in the Eastern Theater suffered from a number of handicaps early in the war. Among those handicaps was the failure by the Union army high command to conceptualize a proper role for cavalry in the war. Another, related, handicap was the slow development of a cadre of competent officers to lead that cavalry.

In the prewar U.S. army, its leading cavalry theorist was Col. Philip St. George Cooke, who wrote the standard treatise on cavalry tactics. Promoted to general at the start of the war, Cooke led Union cavalry during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, but soon after found himself shelved, outmaneuvered by Confederate cavalry commanded by his own son-in-law, Jeb Stuart.

On November 10th Bob O'Neill will take a look at the Union cavalry commanders in Virginia and the influence General Cooke had on their development. The talk will look at the relationship that Cooke had with his younger officers, notably John Buford and Wesley Merritt, while they served together in Utah before the war. The talk will



Bob O'Neill

also take a brief look at both Alfred Pleasanton and George Custer and their early careers as staff officers prior to receiving their stars. Buford and Merritt appear to have benefited from Cooke's mentoring, while Custer, who spent his early career as an aide to several high ranking generals, may have paid the price, post-war, for not having had the same experience.

Bob O'Neill grew up in Detroit and moved to Virginia in 1977 when he took a job with the Fairfax County Police Department. He spent 25 years both in uniform and as a detective before retiring in 2002. Through Marshall Krolick he met John Divine and under John's tutelage wrote an

article on Thoroughfare Gap and the book on the cavalry battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville. Bob has written, or recorded, several

audio/driving tours for the Mosby Heritage Area, covering the fighting in both 1862 and 63 and the operations of John Mosby. Bob is currently working on project detailing the guerrilla war in Northern Virginia to the end of June 1863 - from a Union perspective.



## Battlefield Preservation

BY DAVID ZUCKER

It is with deep sadness that this Round Table learned of the death of Margie Bearss, wife of Ed Bearss, a gifted historian and friend of our CWRT in her own right. To honor her memory, at the November and December CWRT meetings, money will be collected for the Margie Bearss Fund. The money will go to the Civil War Preservation Trust.

The next meeting of the CWRT's Battlefield Preservation Fund Committee will be on December 2, 2006, at Flapjack's Restaurant, 8501 Dempster St. in Niles. All CWRT members in good standing may attend. Breakfast will be available on an individual settlement with the restaurant.

**Harpers Ferry:** On the weekend of August 19th/20th, a group of developers began laying water and sewer lines without obtaining the necessary federal permits, digging a big trench on School House Ridge. The developers showed up at 6 a.m. on Saturday the 19th, accompanied by lawyers and an off-duty police officer. The weekend was picked as the park service was busy with a huge and crowded event at the park. The workers raced through the night to get their work done. At our CWRT's October meeting, citizen petitions were passed out for people to sign. These petitions will be sent to Secretary of the Interior Dick Kempthorne, to protest these "wild west" tactics.

**Cedar Creek:** A proposal for a large quarrying operation on a tract adjoining the new Cedar Creek/Belle Grove National Historical Park has made local preservationists furious. Chemstone, a Middletown, VA subsidiary of Cleveland-based Oglebay-Norton Minerals, has applied to Frederick County to get 639 acres adjacent to the park rezoned to permit mining. Chemstone is eyeing the limestone under the tract, which is owned by Oglebay-Norton. Chemstone once operated a nearby quarry, but had left the 639 acre tract for farming use. Nearly all of the

acreage is part of the core battlefield, where on October 19, 1864, the troops of Generals Sheridan and Early fought in the battle that cost the Confederates the Shenandoah Valley for good. "A mining operation on a battlefield is the worst possible thing," according to Jim Campi, a spokesman for the Civil War Preservation Trust. The battlefield and the Belle Grove Mansion have suffered for years from the visual impact of Chemstone's existing quarry, whose towering pile of waste and industrial machinery dominate the view behind the mansion. The Frederick County Planning Commission has recommended against approval of the rezoning. Among the concerns the commission cited were dust, increased truck traffic, noise and vibration, blasting, night lighting, effects on ground and surface waters, and impact on adjacent property values. One aspect of the rezoning proposal that many find particularly alarming is that the Frederick County Sanitation Authority, a separate special use district, has a 70-year lease with Chemstone and Oglebay-Norton to use its quarry pits as a water source. Frederick County has been hit with a growth surge and it doesn't have sufficient water to meet the expected future development. An authority spokesman indicated they hope to draw water from Cedar Creek itself. More information is available at [Shenandoahvalleyentwork.org](http://Shenandoahvalleyentwork.org) or by writing Preserve Frederick, PO Box 562, Middletown, VA 22645.

**Cedar Creek:** The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields foundation has announced the purchase of a 137 acre portion of Fair Meadows Farm, which lies inside the boundary of the aforementioned Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. The property was the site of the opening phases of the Cedar Creek Battle, in which Confederate troops launched a devastating surprise attack on the Union army. The foundation used

## THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940  
9670 N. Dee #205  
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016  
Phone: 630-460-1865  
[www.thecwrt.org](http://www.thecwrt.org)

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 9670 N. Dee #205 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016, or contact [webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org](mailto:webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org).

\$620,000 in federal funding to purchase the property in two phases, acquiring one parcel last December and the other last July. The 137 acres were part of a larger tract owned by the Powers family of Winchester, who will continue to own the remainder of the property and continue to farm on it.

**Gettysburg:** Until now, few things have been more difficult to arrange than a visit to the Cupola at the top of the Lutheran Seminary Building. Starting November 18th, for the first time in the 170-year history of the building, twice a year public tours will be offered. It was from this vantage point on July 1, 1863, that Union General John Buford spotted the Confederate advance on Gettysburg. "One of my greatest hopes has been to get the Cupola open," said Wayne Motts, Executive Director of the Adams County Historical Society. "Every day somebody comes and knocks on the door and wants to see the Cupola." The building in question, now known as Schmucker Hall, has been leased to the Historical Society since 1959. The tour won't be cheap. The cost will be \$125 a person for non-members of the society or seminary and \$100 a person for members or groups of 10 or more. Profits will go to the seminary's own non-profit group, the Seminary Ridge Historic Foundation. For more, see Civil War News, September, 2006.

## OCTOBER MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On October 13th, the Nevins-Freeman Award, the highest honor bestowed by this Round Table, was presented to Dr. Gordon Dammann. He gave an enthusiastic speech titled "A Museum, a Battlefield, and Hero" before 101 members and guests at the 654th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. A dentist from Lena, Illinois, Dr. Dammann is the author of three books of the *Pictorial Encyclopedia of Civil War Medicine, Instruments and Equipment*. Gordon Dammann is one of the driving forces behind the National Museum of Civil War medicine in Frederick, Maryland. His presentation focused on this museum and his personal hero, Dr. Jonathan Letterman. Dr. Dammann richly deserved our most prestigious award.

When Gordie Dammann began studying Civil War medicine, he became alarmed by the misinformation and incorrect impressions presented as medical fact. "I wanted to tell the true story of Civil War medicine," he declared, "so I obtained a hospital and tent display for various shows around the country." Several times, this display won prizes for the best educational exhibit. This display led to the publication of his first book, on Civil War medical instruments, in 1985.

Eventually Dammann became intensely interested in developing a Civil War medical museum. After forming a committee, the first attempt to start a medical museum at the Piper Farm at the Antietam Battlefield failed. In the early 1990s, a possible museum site at Frederick, Maryland, became available. During 1993-94 Civil War ambulances and field hospital displays were placed in this building. An emphasis on "living history", with sounds and photographs, enhanced the environment within the museum. After several false starts, the Maryland state legislature and the de la Plane family of Frederick financed most of the cost for the new museum.

On October 21, 2000, the National Museum of Civil War medicine opened with 30,000 in attendance. Among the exhibits are a camp life diorama, a portable drug kit, a hospital flag, a tribute to Civil War nurses and doctors, a recruiting room where surgeons examine recruits, and many medical instruments. Personal histories of wounded soldiers, accompanying the photographs, are especially poignant. Other exhibits include a field hospital dressing station, a Civil War tent used by surgeons, and a field evacuation ambulance.

Today the National Museum of Civil War Medicine has expanded to include the Pry House, located east of the Antietam Battlefield. The Pry House is where Union general George McClellan viewed the battle. This location has exhibits that focus on field medicine during and after the Battle of Antietam. "The most pristine battlefield is Antietam," asserted Dammann. A partnership developed between the National Park Service and the museum. Exhibits at the Pry House include interpretive panels and objects related to the care of the wounded, and the ultimate impact on the local civilian population. Dammann gave an impassioned plea to support battlefield preservation, citing the recent destruction of a portion of the Harpers Ferry Battlefield (see page 2 for more on this controversy).

Dammann's personal hero is Dr. Jonathan Letterman, who was the Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac from 1862 to 1864. Letterman was instrumental in removing 6,000 wounded Union soldiers during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862. The Battle of Antietam presented medical personnel with an immense problem—23,000 casualties in one day, the single bloodiest day in American military history. Letterman has been dubbed "The Father of American Battlefield Medicine" for creating the Letterman Plan, an effective plan for treating wounded soldiers. The basic

essentials of the Letterman Plan have been used by the US Army in recent wars.

In the fall of 1863, Letterman became disenchanted with the army, after a conflict with Union General George Meade. In January of 1864 Letterman abruptly resigned. Letterman died in 1872, and his body was eventually buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Dammann claimed that Letterman will be remembered as the one person who brought order and effectiveness to medical service during the Civil War.

In a concluding statement, Dr. Dammann expressed his appreciation for this Round Table in his efforts to build the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. In his opinion, the prestige of this Round Table and its support for his efforts helped persuade local government officials to make his dream a reality.

---

### CWRT COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR 2006-2007

#### **Spring Battlefield Tour:**

Roger Rudich

#### **Membership/Hospitality:**

Donna Tuohy, Paula Walker

#### **Inspector General:**

David Zucker, Tom Trescott

#### **Dinner Reservations:**

Mary Beth Foley

#### **Registrar:** Sonya Reschly

#### **Ways & Means:** Kurt Carlson

#### **Battlefield Preservation:**

Rob Girardi

#### **Honors:** Marshall Krolick

#### **Nevins-Freeman Award:**

Dan Weinburg

#### **Nominations:** Bob Miller

#### **Raffle/Boutique:** Rob Girardi

#### **Sites:** Roger Bohn

#### **Archives:** Jackie Wilson

#### **Audio Librarian/Photos:**

Hal Ardell

#### **Publicity:** Janet Linhart

## GRAPESHOT



The Salt Creek CWRT will be holding its annual Civil War book auction at their Friday, Nov. 17th meeting at the Lisle Hilton. For more information, phone Rick Zarr at (708) 597-2780. This event is always fun and raises lots of money for battlefield preservation.

CWRT past President Bruce Allardice will be giving a talk on Civil War generals at the Nov. 14th get together of the Blue Island Park District CWRT. The event will feature a "Thanksgiving Dinner at the White House." For more information, phone (708) 385-3304 or log on to [www.blueislandparks.org](http://www.blueislandparks.org).

CWRT member Jan Rasmussen will be speaking on "The Minnesota Sioux Uprising of 1862" at the Friday, Nov. 3rd meeting of the Northern Illinois CWRT, 7:30 p.m. at the Arlington Heights Public Library.

CWRT past President Jerry Kowalski, as General George Thomas, will address the Waukesha CWRT on November 14th and the South Suburban CWRT on Nov. 16th.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at [bsallardice1@peoplepc.com](mailto:bsallardice1@peoplepc.com) or (847) 375-8305.

### SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Lapel pins, Meeting Tapes and other items are on sale at each monthly meeting, with proceeds to go to battlefield preservation. There is also a book raffle, with proceeds again going to benefit battlefield preservation.

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by Ralph G. Newman and other members. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum raise of \$1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker's presentation, bidding will close and the highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds benefit battlefield preservation.

### IN MEMORIUM: MARGIE BEARSS

Margie Riddle Bearss died Oct. 7th in Jackson, MS, following a lengthy illness.

A lifelong lover of books, poetry, and Civil War history, Margie married Ed Bearss in 1958. Margie and Ed helped recover, preserve, and catalog artifacts from the Union Ironclad Cairo, now on display at the Vicksburg NMP. She designed and constructed the exhibits at the Grand Gulf Military Park. Her books include *Sherman's Forgotten Campaign* (1987) and two books on Champion Hill. She was elected to membership in the National Military Collectors and Historians, and named Fellow of that organization for her work on the USS Cairo.

Survivors include Ed, their two sons and two daughters.

Memorials may be sent to The Civil War Preservation Trust.

## Bulletin Board



### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated*.

Nov. 10: **Bob O'Neill**, "Learning to Lead: Buford, Merritt, Cooke and Custer"

Dec. 8: **David Bridges**, "Jeb Stuart's Horse Artillery"

Jan. 12, 2007: **Kurt Carlson**, "Chicago During the Civil War"

Feb. 9: **Dan Paterson**, "A Longstreet Pictorial History"

March 9: **Pete Cozzens**, "The Valley Campaign"

April 13: **Robert E. L. Krick**, Topic to be determined

May 11: **Rebecca Cumins**, "Battlefield Preservation"

June 9: **John Coski**, "The Confederate Battle Flag"

On Saturday, December 4, the **Pritzker Military Library** will feature an in-house and a virtual book signing by historians Gabor Boritt (*The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows*) and Douglas Wilson (*Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words*). For reservations and more information, visit [www.PritzkerMilitaryLibrary.org](http://www.PritzkerMilitaryLibrary.org) or phone the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop at (312) 944-3085.