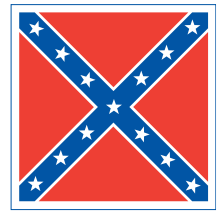


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

Volume LXXI, Number 3

Chicago, Illinois

November 2010



695th REGULAR MEETING

Robert Girardi

on

“Corps Command”

★★★★★

Friday, November 12

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA

350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$45 - Members/Non-members

*Entrée: Roast Pork Loin,
Baked Orange Roughy,
Vegetarian Plate or
Fruit Plate*

please note

Make your reservations by Monday, Nov. 8 by calling 630 460-1865, or emailing chicagocwrttdinner@earthlink.net, with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please call the number before 9 a.m. Thursday.

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 \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$12 with a validated parking sticker.

The Nevins-Freeman Award Address

Robert I. Girardi

on

“Civil War Corps Command:
A Study in Leadership”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

The American Civil War was the great battleground upon which the Regular Army of the United States came of age. For the first time, massive deployment of large armies and the logistical and intelligence networks necessary to support them were put into effect. The nature of combat and command in the Civil War necessitated the reorganization of the armies. Brigades and Divisions, previously the largest organizational bodies were replaced by the introduction of army corps for the first time. The solution to the problem was a problem in itself. No officers of the United States Army had ever commanded anything of the size and complexity of an army corps. While it is true that the army gained much practical experience in the Mexican War, that conflict was as nothing in its scope and scale and in the responsibilities it taught to senior commanders, compared to the latter conflict. The largest army in the Mexican War would have been but a weak army corps in the Civil War that followed.

A number of generals rose to command army corps in the Civil War. For some the job was too complex, for others, a steppingstone to army command. On November 12th Rob Girardi will address both the nature of



Robert I. Girardi

corps command and examine how a number of generals rose—or failed to rise—to the demands of the job.

Past winners of the Chicago CWRT’s prestigious Nevins-Freeman Award include Bruce Catton, Ed Bearss, and last year’s winner, Craig Symonds. Rob Girardi is a worthy successor to our CWRT’s distinguished list of awardees.

Robert I. Girardi lives and works in Chicago, where he is employed as a homicide detective. Rob earned his M.A. in Public History from Loyola University in 1991. He served president of the Chicago CWRT and is currently VP of the

Salt Creek CWRT, Rob has spoken at CWRT events throughout the country. He is on the editorial review board of the Illinois State Historical Society Journal and has consulted with the Chicago History Museum on its Civil War exhibits. He earned an M.A. in Public History from Loyola University in 1991.

Rob has authored, coauthored or edited 8 books, including his latest, *Gettysburg in Art and Artifacts* (2010).



Battlefield Preservation

BY BRIAN SEITER

U.S. Prisoner Artifacts Found At Georgia Site; Camp Lawton Explored by Scott C. Boyd from October *Civil War News*

Millen, Ga- The site of Camp Lawton, a Union soldier prisoner-of-war camp near Millen, is "pristine," according to East Georgia College Professor Emeritus of History Dr. John K. Derden. On August 18th, the unexpected discovery of numerous artifacts from the camp was announced by Georgia Southern University and the two other major organizations involved.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) operates Magnolia Springs State Park, where the majority of Camp Lawton's remains are. The rest are in the adjacent Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers. The artifacts were found on this site. The DNR commissioned the archeological work by Georgia Southern University which led to the discoveries.

The team is led by Georgia Southern graduate student J. Kevin Chapman. His faculty mentor, Professor of Anthropology Dr. Sue M. Moore, supervises Chapman and five other graduate students. Derden, who is writing a book about Camp Lawton, said he was "adopted as the project historian" when he spoke with Chapman, a former student of his, about their mutual interest in the site.

Magnolia Springs State Park has long displayed informational signs about Camp Lawton being there. Earthworks from the fortifications that overlooked the 42-acre wooden prison stockade remain visible. The stockade disappeared over time.

Professor Moore says the current archeological effort was initiated

in the spring of 2009 when DNR Commissioner Chris Clark asked her to conduct a survey of Camp Lawton. When Kevin Chapman told Moore he wanted to return to Georgia Southern for a master's degree in anthropology, he recalls she said, "Great. I've got just the project you." She describes a little community service project at the park and hatchery. "There won't be a whole lot to it because there's not a whole lot there." The work began in December 2009. "We originally thought we would find features, things like the stockade walls and maybe the footing for the brick ovens, but we did not expect to find artifacts," Moore said. "We had pretty much assumed those were already gone. It turned out when we excavated they were not, in fact, gone." They were found in the spring on the hatchery side of the camp.

Chapman wrote on the project web site: "We began to retrieve an amazing collection of artifacts proving that the site was of unexpected importance. The artifacts are not only visually impressive, but they also tell an incredible story individually and as a whole." He estimates they have found 350 artifacts so far. Some of them will go on display at the Georgia Southern University Museum October 10th. A clay tobacco pipe with an improvised lead bowl is Chapman's favorite so far. "The idea of a lead bowl or a pipe is kind of baffling until you think that's probably the only alternative that soldier had." A tourniquet buckle is one of Moore's favorite finds, she said, "because it tells you a little about things that are going on there, whether it's the medical care or whether it's that somebody maybe had a tourniquet buckle that

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The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or contact bsa1861@att.net.

they reused to hold something else, we don't know yet." She said it has preserved cloth in it. "That's a real rare thing for us to be able to find."

As far as Confederate prisons go, Camp Lawton was one-of-a-kind, according to Chapman. He said the Confederacy had 36 major prisons, 18 of which had stockades. Camp Lawton is the only prison stockade with its remains intact, he said. The rest have been looted or ploughed over. The camp's 42-acre stockade was also the largest, exceeding the 26.5 acres at Camp Sumter at Andersonville, Ga. For information about the camp go to www.georgiasouthern.edu/camplawton and www.fws.gov/camplawtonsite.

Good News!—Our CWRTs preservation donations have helped the **Johnson Island Civil War Prison** site preserve 17 acres which include most of the prison depot. The Chicago CWRT will be listed on a bronze plaque as a major contributor to the site preservation. Visit the Johnson Island website for more information.

October Meeting

BY MARK MATRANGA

Earl Hess addressed 51 members and guests at the 694th meeting of the Chicago Civil War Round Table on October 8, 2010, on the subject of "Soldier Life in the Trenches at Petersburg." During the 292-day siege of Petersburg, the Army of Northern Virginia and its counterpart Army of the Potomac developed extensive and sophisticated systems of field fortifications. Measured by linear feet of parapets, these earthworks stretched 127.4 miles and covered Petersburg and the south and east approaches to Richmond, as well as the Bermuda Hundred between the Appomattox and James Rivers. Thirty-five miles of entrenchments lay south of the Appomattox, and included 41 union forts and numerous confederate redoubts.

The trenches at Petersburg were not only longer, but deeper and with thicker parapets and more massive fields of obstruction than other entrenchments in the war. Also, the trenches at Petersburg were protected by 'torpedo belts' - 2,266 yards of Confederate earthworks north of the James were fronted by a thick belt of mines.

Some 100,000 Union and Confederate troops occupied the trenches around Petersburg. The armies used wood for fuel as well as for constructing fortifications and clearing fields of fire between lines. This contributed to ecological change: before the campaign, the area was 50% forested; after, only 22%. Forty four hundred acres of forest were lost in eleven months.

As early as August 1864, the deleterious effects of trench life were recorded by the Inspector General of Hagood's South Carolina brigade, who wrote that "vermin abounded" and that mens' "digestive organs became impaired by the rations

that were issued and the manner in which they were prepared. Diarrhea and dysentery were universal." Extremities swelled due to staying in deep trenches, until the men could no longer wear their shoes. The "filth of their persons from the scarcity of water is almost unbearable."

Thomas Jackson Strayhorn of the 27th North Carolina was repelled by the thought of being in "those dirty ditches....they are so dirty and hot you can get no air at all scarcely." Trench life caused L.S. Rogers of the 56th North Carolina to feel as if he were imprisoned. "My mind is so confused," he wrote. Exposure to constant sniping on picket lines exacerbated stress, although truces broke the monotony.

Deforestation also contributed to ill health. Without natural cover, enormous clouds of sand and clay dust, 'fine and sticky,' arose whenever someone walked. "You see nothing but dust at Petersburg. You smell dust, you eat dust, you drink dust. Your clothes, your blanket, your food, your drink, are all permeated with dust," wrote the chaplain of the 102nd Pennsylvania. Rainstorms turned the dust into soupy mud and the trenches into rivers. Bombproofs provided protection but were damp and muddy and infested with rats. Poor sanitation habits made the entrenchments open cesspools and produced fields of human waste, "nuisances," behind the lines.

In dry weather, dust caked on soldiers' bodies and they were beset swarms of flies. Combined with a shortage of soap, the itching this caused affected health and welfare. "The great want of cleanliness is now producing sickness among the men in the trenches," Lee wrote Davis in August 1864, "and must affect their self-respect and their morale." And

so it did: 5,928 Confederate soldiers deserted in the period from January through the end of March, 1865. Overall approximate casualties were 42,000, Union, and 28,000, Confederate.

Calling Petersburg a siege is a misnomer, said Hess. Contrary to popular conception, it did not foreshadow the static warfare of WWI. Rather, it was an extended component of a 165-mile mobile offensive which took place over the year from the Wilderness to Appomattox. Petersburg was never completely cut off from the outside and Grant constantly extended his lines and attempted to maneuver Lee out of his. This he ultimately did on April 3, 1865.

A recording of this (and every) meeting is available from **Hal Ardell**, audio librarian. Contact Hal at (773) 774-6781 or hal229@ameritech.net.

Camp Douglas Preservation

A new effort to preserve the Camp Douglas site in Bronzeville is quickly building momentum. The Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation has been formed to establish a permanent memorial as well as interpretive and educational facilities. The Foundation has enlisted many of Bronzeville's community groups, and all are participating and supporting the effort, as are the Chicago History Museum and the DuSable Museum. Funding for an archaeological dig has also been approved by Loyola University for summer 2011. Volunteers are needed for fund raising, community outreach, gallery design, developing programs, and research. To learn more or to sign on to help, visit www.campdouglas.org.

GRAPESHOT



If you'd like to see **photos** of our meetings, **Hal Ardell** has posted some albums at our website. www.chicagocwrt.org.

Dave Corbett and his "Battlefield Balladeers" will perform Nov. 16th at the Lincoln-Davis CWRT in Alsip. Visit www.youtube.com/battlefieldballadeers for details.

On November 16th **Larry Hewitt** will address the Twin Cities CWRT on "Lee's Finest Hour (or two)"

On November 6th **Bruce Allardice** will speak on "Who the Heck is Abner Doubleday?: Baseball and the Civil War" at the McHenry County Civil War Symposium.

Paula Walker will speak on "G. K. Warren & the Battle of Five Forks" at the November 3rd meeting of the Kankakee CWRT.

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsa1861@att.net or (630) 297-8046.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus years of audio recordings of CWRT lectures by distinguished historians are available and can be purchased in either audio cassette or CD format. For lecture lists, contact Hal Ardell at hal229@ameritech.net or phone him at (773) 774-6781.

Each meeting features a book raffle, with proceeds going to battlefield preservation. There is also a silent auction for books donated by Ralph Newman and others, again with proceeds benefiting battlefield preservation.

Upcoming Civil War Events

- Nov. 3rd, Kankakee Valley CWRT: **Paula Walker** on "G. K. Warren"
- Nov. 5th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Frank O'Reilley on "Battle of Spotylvania: Bloody Angle"
- Nov. 6th: McHenry County CWRT Annual Symposium, featuring David Powell on "Chickamauga" and **Bruce Allardice** on "Civil War Baseball"
- Nov. 6th, Kenosha Civil War Museum: The "Wide Awake Rally" from 12-4. Visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org for more details.
- Nov. 9th, Lake County CWRT: Rick Benson on "Captain Henry Wirz"
- Nov. 11th, **Veterans Day at Cantigny**, a Luminary Tribute from Dusk-9:00 p.m.
- Nov. 11th, Milwaukee CWRT: **Rob Girardi** on "Corps Command"
- Nov. 16th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT in Alsip: **Dave Corbett** and the "Battlefield Balladeers" perform
- Nov. 18th, South Suburban CWRT: Helen Milam on "Darling of the South: Pauline Cushman"
- Nov. 19th, Salt Creek CWRT: Annual Battlefield Preservation Auction (at the Glen Ellyn History Center)

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. 12: Robert Girardi, the Nevins Freeman Address
- Dec. 10: Samuel C. Hyde, "A Wisconsin Yankee in the Confederate Bayou Country"
- Jan. 14, 2011: Lawrence L. Hewitt, "Slandered Heroes: Deserters Who Didn't"
- Feb. 11: Dan Sutherland on "Guerilla War"
- March 11: Susan Boardman, "Gettysburg Cyclorama"
- April 8: Richard McMurry, TBA
- May 13: Tom Schott, "Alexander Stephens"
- June 10: Peter Carmichael, TBA

Reminders

Bjorn Skaptason at the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** reminds us that the next "Virtual Book Signing" will be Nov. 11th at 6:00 p.m., Nora Titone talking about her new book, *My Thoughts: Be Bloody*, and Roger Billings talking about *Abraham Lincoln, Esq.* For more information on these and upcoming events, visit www.virtualbooksigning.net or www.alincolnbookshop.com.

Jerry Kowalski informs us that a **Veterans Day** program entitled "Letters from Home" will be presented at **Rosehill Cemetery** on Nov. 7th, at 10:30 a.m. American military from the Revolution to the present will be there, to honor our veterans. Coffee and donuts will be served afterwards.