



CINCINNATI
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
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THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

Cincinnati CWRT PO Box 621082 Cincinnati, Ohio 45262 <http://www.cincinnatiwrt.org>
November, 2006 Issue

Meeting Date: November 16th, 2006

Place: Quality Hotel and Suites

Time: (6:00) Sign-in and Conversation

(6:45) Dinner: - Spinach Salad, Triple Nut Crusted Chicken, Seasonal Vegetable Medley,
Duchess Potatoes, Cherry Cordial Ice Cream

(7:45): Meeting and Program

Speaker: Greg Biggs, Clarksville, Tennessee CWRT

Topic: "The Crack of Doom: The Collapse of Confederate Department No. 2"

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do not have an Automatic Reservation, please remember to email your meeting reservation to reservations@cincinnatiwrt.org or call it in to Bob Limoseth (h) 513-777-2160; rlimo@fuse.net

In November we welcome back Greg Biggs, the current President and Program Chair of the Clarksville (TN) Civil War Round Table, who will be making his 6th speaking appearance before the Cincinnati CWRT. Before moving to Tennessee several years ago, Greg had filled several different leadership roles within the Ohio Civil War community, including vice president and program director positions with the Western Ohio Civil War Round Table and the Ohio Civil War Association. He was also an Associate Editor of *Blue & Gray Magazine*, the most renowned publication for self-guided Civil War tours in the world. Greg has written and published articles for *Blue & Gray Magazine*, *Civil War Regiments*, and *American Vexillum Magazine*, and he has been a research contributor to Civil War books written by such authors as Larry Daniel, Robert Maberry, Gordon Rhea, Russell Brown, John Coski, Wiley Sword, Eric Wittenberg, and Andrew Johnson. Greg is presently authoring two books entitled *Tattered Banners: Alabama's Civil War Flags* and *I Go To Illustrate Georgia: Civil War Flags Of Georgia Troops*, forthcoming from Ironclad Publishing.

Greg's presentation will analyze the politics and military problems of Confederate Department No. 2 (Cumberland Gap to the Mississippi River), from the Summer of 1861 through its collapse in February of 1862. Within the Military Department No. 2 were fought many of the earliest, and arguably the most critical, battles of the Western Theater, including Belmont, Wild Cat Mountain, Mill Springs, Fort Henry, and Fort Donelson. Greg will discuss the mistakes made by Confederate commanders from the local level up to the Confederate White House. He will also highlight the extraordinary moves made by the department commander, CSA General Albert Sidney Johnston, to keep the Federals at bay for nearly 6 months during this key period of the Civil War.



We Who Study Must Also Strive To Save!



Preservation News:

We want to remind our group that our dedicated preservation project for this campaign season revolves around the Richmond and Perryville Battlefields located in the State of Kentucky.

As many of you know, the primary factor that allows our Round Table to operate as a 501(C)3 organization is our education and support of Civil War related preservation activities.

Any donations collected between now and December 31st will be given to the Civil War Preservation Trust. The goal of the Civil War Preservation Trust is to save 454 acres of unprotected land at both the Richmond and Perryville Battlefields (300 acres are at the Richmond Battlefield and another 154 acres is at the Perryville Battlefield).

We chose this preservation project due to it's close proximity to Cincinnati and because many of us have visited these sites and are familiar with them. We also chose this project because we feel that it will provide us an opportunity to maximize our contributions via a large matching dollar incentive that we may not be able to accomplish as individuals. Our donations will be matched \$1.00 to \$12.30 by the Preservation Trust. The Round Table will also match your donations on a one for two basis, up to a \$250.00 cap. Our goal remains \$1,000.00 and we hope you will consider supporting this project.

Contributions can be made at the check-in-desk during our monthly meetings, or by mailing your gift to our Treasurer, Jim Stewart at Cincinnati CWRT, P.O. Box 621082, Cincinnati, Ohio 45262. Checks should be made out to the "Cincinnati CWRT" and the memo line should indicate "Perryville Battlefield". A receipt will be provided as all contributions are tax deductible under our status as a 501(C)3 organization. Donations can be accepted anytime from now until the May 2007 meeting.



New Book Raffle Procedure—We Need Your Donations:

If you would like to donate any of your personal civil war books to help us raise more money for Civil War Preservation Projects, please give your books to Bob Limoseth at any of our future monthly meetings.



Anniversary Meeting Thank You!

Four of our most active members were largely responsible for the success of our October 50th Anniversary meeting. Dawn Mowery was our 50th Anniversary Chairperson and she was responsible for coordinating the various activities that make a meeting like this possible. Dawn handled the details of the book raffle, provided the transportation for Dr. Robertson while in town, provided copy for the evening's program and made contact with the other members working on arrangements for the evening to insure everything was done on time. Dan Reigle was the person responsible for the historical video that ran before and during dinner, he provided large portions of the material printed in the anniversary program, his contacts with Dr. James I. Robertson resulted in Bud's acceptance of our speaking invitation, and he was the one who spent hours and hours compiling the historical artifacts displayed on the various tables at the front of the room. Jack Simon provided the original contact with Stanley Wernz, our Lincoln presenter, through his work with the Association of Lincoln Presenters, obtained the forty free copies of the CHS Bulletin with Jim Barnett's Spring Grove article and brought the Camp Dennison lithograph for display. Jim Chaney also provided a significant amount of time and talent to the evening's activities with his design and production of the evening's program, the lectern card, the new table banner, some of the raffle prizes, and he was also our photographer and video recorder for the evening. The thanks of the entire membership goes out to these four members for all their efforts in making the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table so memorable.



Video of Dr. James I. Robertson's Anniversary Presentation Is Now Available:

A video in VHS format of Dr. Robertson's presentation on *Reflections on the Civil War Centennial* is now available to members who were unable to be in attendance at our October 50th Anniversary meeting. We will loan it out to members for viewing based on a first come, first served distribution list being maintained by Jim Chaney. If you are interested in having your name placed on the list please see Jim at the next meeting or contact him at jchaney@davmail.org, or 859.442.2047, to place your request. We ask that members not hold on to the tape for too long a period of time so that others may also view it in a timely manner.

Book Review by Thomas L. Breiner

Commanding the Army of the Potomac by Stephen R. Taaffe, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 2006, 284 pages, Hard cover \$34.95.

Commanding the Army of the Potomac by Stephen R. Taaffe is the latest in a line of works studying the command structure and the interpersonal relationships within the Union's showcase army. The author has added a slight twist to the study by examining the selection and retention of the 36 men who were assigned to the position of Corps Commander. This has created a fresh approach to an old idea.

Stephen Taaffe breaks down his study of the command cadre by each commander of the Army of the Potomac: George McClellan, Ambrose Burnside, Joe Hooker, George Meade and finally, under U. S. Grant's supervision as Commander in Chief. He then evaluates each of the corps commanders based on how he acquired the position and

then their relationship to the Army commander and how it impacted on the various campaigns of the Commanding General. Of the 36 men who were assigned to either temporary or permanent command of the various corps in the Army of the Potomac, only three held the position for more than a year. These were Gouverneur Warren, John Sedgwick and Horatio Wright. Three rose from corps command to command of the army – Ambrose Burnside, Joe Hooker and George Meade. Phil Sheridan and Edward Ord were rewarded with commands of other armies – the Army of the Shenandoah and the Army of the James, respectively. Oliver Howard and Henry Slocum managed to rise to army command after being transfer from the Army of the Potomac to the western theater. Finally, the Lincoln administration appointed Franz Sigel to command of an army in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864 for political reasons.

The process of creating and assigning officers to corps command started off on a bad note. George McClellan had his four initial corps commanders assigned by the Lincoln administration based strictly on seniority and definitely not men of his choosing. He eventually created two additional corps commanders and assigned men more attuned to his program, Fitz John Porter and William Franklin, even though Franklin would prove to be a disappointment. Major General Burnside was given the opportunity to switch his commanders but failed to take advantage of the offer.

The author looks at each Commander of the Army of the Potomac in turn and how they selected their most important subordinates and how they removed them when necessary. The Army of the Potomac's corps commanders fell into one of four categories. The first were the McClellanites, those that sympathized with or supported George McClellan. The second category were the officers that received their appointment by the Lincoln administration either through the expedient of being the senior division commander within the corps, an unassigned senior major general or a political general that Lincoln needed to satisfy constituencies. The third category of corps commanders were those who aligned themselves with some politician or senior general that could advance their careers. The final category includes the officers that advanced through the ranks and were eventually promoted to corps command based on merit.

Stephen Taaffe has written a book that I found to be well researched, well written and a pleasure to read. While there were a few errors in the work, they were more editing miscues than problems with the author's research. The few maps provided were insignificant or not extremely valuable to the discussion. Here is a work that provides the reader with a fresh and slightly different approach to the study of the Army of the Potomac. However, I found nothing new has been added to the general knowledge base concerning the command structure of the army. While I would not recommend this work to a beginner in the study of the war, I certainly do think it has merit and value for those who are students of the war and desire to know a little more about the command relationships within the Army of the Potomac.

November 9th Book Event at NKU: New Book on Sue Mundy

Northern Kentucky University's Friends of Steely Library will present the first public reading of former Kentucky Poet Laureate Richard Taylor's newest work, SUE MUNDY: A NOVEL OF THE CIVIL WAR, on Thursday, November 9, 2006, at 7 p.m. in the loggia of Steely Library, on the Highland Heights campus. The reading is free and open to the public.

Books will be available for purchase at a reception following the reading, with a portion of the proceeds donated by the NKU Bookstore to the Friends of Steely Library. For more information, contact Julie Matthews at (859) 572-5636 or matthewsju@nku.edu.

Quiz---October, 2006

1. In his book *Soldiers Blue & Gray*, Dr. Robertson quotes a Cincinnati officer's address to his unit before the second day at Chancellorsville: "Some of you will not see another sunrise. If there is a man in the ranks who is not ready to die for his country, let him come to me and I will give him a pass to go to the rear, for I want no half-hearted, unwilling soldiers or cowards in the ranks." Who was this officer?
2. For most of the post-war years, former Confederate soldiers were not eligible for veterans' pensions paid by the Federal government. However, Congress ultimately passed a bill that made over a thousand Confederate widows eligible for Federal pensions, and during debate in the House, eligibility was also extended to the remaining Confederate veterans. Which President of the United States signed this bill?
3. According to Dr. Robertson in *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend*, who is the "largest single source for material on Jackson?" In addition to his own writings, this person also collected Jackson materials for the remainder of his life.
4. Among the seven commanders of the famed Stonewall Brigade was one nicknamed "Stonewall Jim" by the troops. What was his last name?
5. This staple of the Confederate soldier's diet was described by one Stonewall Brigade troop as "consistency resembling India rubber. It could be stretched into ropes and pressed into balls. One bite of it would have raised enough nightmares [to cause one] to ride a regiment of horses for a week." What was this delicacy?
6. The Rockbridge Artillery, formed in Lexington at the time of Virginia's secession, had as its (second) captain Reverend William Nelson Pendleton, the Episcopal rector of Lexington. In deference to their clergyman-captain, what did the artillerists name their four guns?



October Presentation, Summarized by Albert Hallenberg:

It was very appropriate that Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson, Jr. was the speaker at our Round Table's 50th Anniversary commemoration. Dr. Robertson is hardly a stranger to us. He first spoke to the CCWRT in January 1960 and, since then, has spoken to our Round Table eleven additional times! In a career spanning almost 50 years, Dr. Robertson, as well as being an Alumni Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech University, is also a published author (including the acclaimed work, *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, The Legend*) and a regular guest on History Channel Civil War programs.

But, early in his career in the 1960's, Dr. Robertson had the distinction of being appointed Executive Director of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. The Civil War Centennial was the longest national observance in U.S. history, and sparked a nationwide interest in the conflict. But before Dr. Robertson's tenure, the observance got off to a rocky start. Dr. Robertson related how after Congress formed the Centennial Commission, the original officers did not seem to treat the historical aspects very seriously. The event seemed inappropriately more like a celebration than a commemoration.

When John F. Kennedy entered the Oval Office in 1961, his deep appreciation for history was offended by the frivolous Centennial activities. He purged the Commission, placing his good friend, the brilliant historian, Allan Nevins, as Chairman. But the Commission needed an Executive Director. An Iowa Congressman, who was influential in passing the original Centennial legislation, approached a young Dr. Robertson to take the position. Dr. Robertson declined several times as he was married with two small children. Fortunately, he finally accepted. For the next four years, Dr. Robertson was instrumental in bringing the Commission up to speed. One major

project was to bring peace among the individual state commissions, no small task considering at the time a number of people were still fighting the War in a figurative sense. Dr. Robertson related how his leadership was also used in a very practical way when he worked with a local organization to prevent power lines from being installed at the Antietam battlefield. This effort may well have been the first major Civil War preservation project.

Throughout his tenure, Dr. Robertson talked about how the fruits of the Commission's labors branched out in several ways: public visits to battlefield sites increased dramatically and Civil War publications attained a far higher quality. Dr. Robertson rubbed shoulders with all the great writers. He mentioned how Bruce Catton taught him to write a substantive narrative that the public at large could grasp. He also talked about how the great historian Bell Wiley conveyed to him the value of accuracy (Dr. Robertson still has several pages from his doctoral thesis marked "bloody" red by Dr. Wiley).

One of the last tasks President Kennedy requested from Dr. Robertson was to prepare a commemoration for the Gettysburg Address as the centennial anniversary of that great speech was fast approaching in November of 1963. Of course, President Kennedy never had a chance to speak at that commemoration. Dr. Robertson related the sad task he had to undertake to prepare the East Room exactly as it was when President Lincoln was laid out. Ironically, Dr. Robertson's experience as a part time helper at a funeral home during his college years proved to be of great value in insuring proper decorum was followed.

On a lighter note, in February of 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson called Dr. Robertson and asked him to invite 100 individuals to a luncheon honoring Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Dr. Robertson said he had no problem with invitations as he knew a multitude of historians and others who had helped with the Commission. He also hit upon the idea of inviting several Hollywood actors who had played the role of Lincoln. Thus, on the appointed day several great names in acting made an appearance, including Raymond Massey, Henry Fonda and Gregory Peck. Dr. Robertson happened to sit at their table and it was perhaps then the movie bug bit him, as he would later become a historical consultant for the film, *Gods & Generals*.

In 2011, the Civil War will have reached its sesquicentennial anniversary. In recent years, Dr. Robertson has noted general public interest in the Civil War seems to be sagging. Dr. Robertson alluded to a number of reasons, including de-emphasis on the teaching of history in the schools and a general mistrust of government in recent years. Due to large political schisms in Congress, unfortunately no bill to recognize the upcoming Sesquicentennial has been able to get off the ground. However, Dr. Robertson still has hope as book sales on the subject are steady, many high quality narratives are still being written and, of course, feature films such as *Cold Mountain* and *Gods and Generals* can still spark the public's interest.

Dr. Robertson told how he had a warm place in his heart for the Cincinnati CWRT and the feeling is certainly mutual among our members. Dr. Robertson's appearance was a true highlight in the Round Table's 50th year commemoration, and we thank him for taking the time to speak to us.



Quiz Answers—October, 2006

1. Col. Robert Reily, commanding officer of the 75th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and a founder of the town of Wyoming, OH. Col. Reily died as the XI Corps was overrun by Stonewall Jackson's flank attack. (Robertson, *Soldiers Blue & Gray*, 215.)
2. President Dwight Eisenhower, on 24 May 1958. There were two surviving Confederate veterans, 112-year-old John Salling of Virginia and 114-year-old Walter Williams of Texas. (Vogel, "Redefining Reconciliation: Confederate Veterans and the Southern Responses to Federal Civil War Pensions," *Civil War History*, March 2005, 89.)
3. Jedediah Hotchkiss, Jackson's mapmaker and versatile staff officer, who served subsequent II Corps commanders throughout the war. (Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 849.)
4. Walker, Brig. Gen. James A. Commanded from May 19, 1863 (after Paxton's death at Chancellorsville) until wounded at Spotsylvania on May 12, 1864. (Robertson, *The Stonewall Brigade*, p. 187, 197, 225).
5. Cornbread (Robertson, *Soldiers Blue and Gray*, 67-68).
6. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. (Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, p. 240)



NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

To facilitate the printing and timely distribution of the monthly newsletter, information for it should be submitted to the editor no later than the following dates:

December 15th, 2006
January 22nd, 2007
February 19th, 2007
March 19th, 2007
April 23rd, 2007

Information may be emailed to waldbill@xavier.edu



FUTURE PRESENTATIONS

2006-2007 Programs

January 18 th , 2007	Dr. John Cimprich, Thomas More College, Fort Pillow
February 15 th , 2007	Bob McLaurin, CCWRT, The River Navy
March 15 th , 2007	Jack Simon, CCWRT, Fortifications
April 19 th , 2007	Terry Winschel, Vicksburg National Military Park
May 17 th , 2007	Harold George, Lakewood, OH, 9 th Ohio Independent Battery Light Artillery
September 20, 2007	Dr. Lenette S. Taylor, Kent State University "The Supply For Tomorrow Must Not Fail: The Civil War of Captain Simon Perkins Jr., A Union Quartermaster."
October 18, 2007	Richard M. McMurry—Topic to be announced
November 15, 2007	Gary Ecelbarger "The Unheralded Alliance: John 'Black Jack' Logan and Ulysses S. Grant"



ABOUT THE CINCINNATI CWRT

Membership in the Cincinnati CWRT is open to anyone with an active interest in the American Civil War. Annual dues (prorated throughout the year to new members) are \$25 for a Regular Membership. This fee helps cover operating costs which include this

newsletter, as well as speaker expenses. A Sustaining Member level of membership is also available. Sustaining members are members who have made financial contributions of \$25 or more in addition to their annual dues in any fiscal year. The purpose of this membership category is to encourage and recognize members who make additional contributions to the objectives and programs of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table. If you are joining for the first time, there is a one-time initiation fee of \$20.

Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Quality Hotel and Suites, 4747 Montgomery Road, Norwood, Ohio (**telephone 513-351-6000**). If traveling Interstate 75, exit at Exit #7, Ohio 562 (The Norwood Lateral) and travel east to the Montgomery Road exit. After exiting, "double-back" by turning left across the bridge, turning left again after the bridge, and turning left at the light onto Montgomery. If coming from Interstate 71, also exit at Exit #7, Ohio 562 (The Norwood Lateral) and go west to the Montgomery Road exit. After exiting, continue straight to the light and turn left onto Montgomery. The Quality is on the right, and there is plenty of free parking.

Dinner reservations are required, and can be made prior to the reservations deadline either by an email to reservations@cincinnatiwrt.org or by a phone call to the officer taking reservations for the meeting (whose name and number is listed on the header of the current *Canister*). **Late reservations** (after Sunday prior to the meeting) will be accepted, but will cause an adjustment of arrangements with the Quality, and may require an alternate meal selection, depending on total attendance. **Walk-ins without a reservation** will be able to have dinner if available based on total attendance. **Late cancellations** may be made by email or phone. Since a cancellation after the Sunday deadline means that CCWRT has guaranteed payment to the Quality for the reserved number of meals, the Treasurer will review the number of late cancellations and late reservations for every meeting. If a late cancellation results in CCWRT being required to pay for an extra meal, the person making the late cancellation will be expected to pay for the dinner. **No-shows** who have a dinner reservation but do not attend or cancel will be expected to pay for the dinner. **Meals** currently cost \$20. Menu selection will change with each meeting.

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