

Bugle Call Echoes

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

January 2005

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San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table 2005 Board of Directors

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Round Table starts year with Jan. 27th meeting's 'Show and Tell' format

As I look forward to the upcoming year of activities planned for the club, I am encouraged and enthusiastic. There is a lot of energy and interest bursting from the seams.

This year represents a changing of the guard with the retirement of Barbara and Ken Moats from the Board after 12 years of intense involvement. Their dedication and hard work have left a legacy of which they can be proud. We, the newer members of the Board will certainly do our best to continue the momentum thus begun.

Our first meeting on January 27th will be an all-club event with members bringing forward items or stories of interest to share with others. For some members who prefer not to prepare full programs to present, this is a nice opportunity to address your friends and to have a say. We encourage everyone who has an interest to step forward. If you have the time, let David Davenport know that you wish to speak and he can create an agenda on the spot. This evening is fairly informal.

Our speaker's program is fast filling up. I know that there are some who have indicated a desire to make a presentation. If so, again, contact David Davenport. We look forward to our first meeting in just two weeks.

Brian Clague Club President

2005 Memberships
Due Now

Your 2005 membership year is from January to December. If you have not renewed your membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Roundtable, they are due now. Use the form on the back to become current. The cost of membership remains the same:

Individual or family -
\$25.00

Student or newsletter
only - \$12.50

As always,
\$5.00 of each membership
goes toward Civil War Battlefield
Preservation.

For Dinner Reservations at
our next meeting at the
Ramada Inn at the Shaw
offramp on Highway 41...

... contact Secretary Phyllis
Mann at 229-3778 [afternoons
and evenings, please].



AFTER ACTION REPORT

By Ron Vaughan

This report has been delayed due to 'enemy action' [computer virus]. Our meeting of Nov. 11, 2004, had 18 in attendance for Fred Bohmfalk's double presentation on the forming of the Friends of Alcatraz [reported in the December issue] and the Civil War veteran organizations.

Of the roughly 3 million men who served in the Civil War, 550,000 men died, 170,000 battle deaths, and 380,000 from disease. Soon after the war, the survivors started forming veterans groups. Union veterans organized the Grand Army of the Republic, which had its first national encampment in 1866 with Gen. John Logan elected as the first national commander. Membership peaked in 1890 with 409,000 members. Their stated purpose was fellowship, honor the dead, medical care for veterans, upholding the Constitution, and becoming a political force. The GAR was definitely a political force. Its legacy included improved veterans benefits and the establishment of Decoration Day, which is now called Memorial Day. The last national encampment was 1949 when six of the remaining 16 members attended. Their ages ranged from 102 to 108. The last member died at 108 and thus passed everything on to the Sons of Union Veterans.

The Southern veterans got a later start, forming the United Confederate Veterans, with their first national encampment in 1889, commanded by Gen. John Gordon. They organized as a "Patriotic and Benevolent association without Political Activity or Prejudice." The stated purposes were the same as the GAR, but they added a Committee of Southern History and a vow to erect a monument to Jefferson Davis. Their membership topped out in 1906 at 80,000. Their last encampment was in 1951 when they passed the mantle to the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Only a dozen of us met on December 4th for a great dinner at the Kuykendall home. They have a lovely home, situated on a hilltop that overlooks green valleys and a rocky ridge. Before dinner Neil had set up some targets and provided loaded cap and ball revolvers ready for those who wished to try their shooting skill. Ken managed to wing a dangerously aggressive coffee can, while Dr. Dave drilled a killer commode seat! I understand that there are plans to have our June picnic at this wonderful site. Be sure not to miss it!

U.S. Nearer to answer on Civil War Mystery Men

by Michael Kilian - *Chicago Tribune* national correspondent

Newport News, VA -- The last two unburied dead of the Civil War have not been forgotten. Painstaking research may result in a report next year on the identities of two seamen pulled from the sunken USS Monitor. For 140 years, they lay trapped in the turret of the legendary ironclad USS Monitor on the seas bottom 16 miles off Cape Hatteras, NC.

Discovered when the turret was raised by marine archeologists two years ago, the skeletal remains of these two 19th century sailors have since reposed at the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, where forensics experts have been assessing DNA samples and other evidence in hopes of determining the men's identities. It is known that four officers and 12 enlisted seamen died when the Union Monitor floundered during a gale while being towed to the Carolinas on New Year's Eve 1862. But which two these might be has baffled scholars and investigators.

That the remains were found in the turret has been of little help. "Nobody should have been in there," said Monitor Sanctuary Manager John Broadwater. "While it was under tow, that would have been a real rough place to be. It would have been wet, and up high, so you would have been tossed around....there would have been no reason for anybody to be up there and probably nobody wanted to be."

The epic March 9, 1862, battle between the Monitor and the Confederate ironclad CSS Virginia - the first clash between iron-sided warships - changed the course of naval history. The slugfest between the two forerunners of the modern warship ended in a draw, as the Virginia was prevented from taking any further action against the Union blockading fleet.

By year's end it was decided that the steamer Rhode Island would tow the Monitor to Carolina ports for use against Confederate vessels there. A ferocious gale struck the ships passing Cape Hatteras on the Outer Banks. Taking on water, the Monitor requested that the Rhode Island send boats to take off the 60-some crew members, but not all could be rescued. The last anyone aboard the Rhode Island saw of the ironclad was the eerie glow of the red lantern that had been affixed to the Monitor's mast.

The wreck of the Monitor was not found until 1974, some 240 feet below the surface. In 2002, the turret was brought to the surface and then taken ashore as an emergency measure to prevent further deterioration. The skeletal remains were discovered almost immediately after the turret was brought ashore. "...according to the forensics folks in Hawaii, we did get some fairly good DNA... which gives us some information but not so much as we hoped for," reported Broadwater. One of the guys still had his boots on and a number of brass buttons were recovered which may help narrow the identification process.

Once the Navy gets the report said Retired Army Lt. Col. Johnnie Webb, the really hard part begins. "They have to find a maternal relative of one of the sailors and make a DNA match with a blood sample," he said.

We thank Charlie Jorgensen for forwarding this story.

The Battle Still Rages

This land preservation update will highlight lands that have been saved and lands where efforts are either underway or ongoing.

Civil War Preservation Trust has efforts underway to save 128 acres at Five Forks, 620 acres at Sailor's Creek, and 71 acres at Appomattox. All of these locations in Virginia help to tell the story of Lee's retreat during the Appomattox Campaign of 1865. That is a total of 819 acres with a price tag of \$584 per acre.

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has recently saved 140 acres at the site of the 1st day's fighting at Chancellorsville. This land was saved by the cooperation of Civil War Preservation Trust, Tricord Homes, and the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors. This effort prevented the 2000-home Dogwood Development.

Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg has recently secured two parcels of historically significant land. The parcels are 80.3 acres on Black Horse Pike and 9.3 acres west of the Round Tops, both formerly privately owned. These lands are within the 6000-acre boundaries of the Gettysburg National Military Park. Approximately 20% of the land within these boundaries is still privately owned.

The preservation fight continues with time running out. Developers are snatching up historically significant lands at high prices making this battle an expensive one. Once this land is gone, it is lost forever. By 2010, probably all of the remaining lands that should be saved will be gone.

Your contributions now to organizations like the 3 listed above are very much needed.

Tom

MEMBERSHIP FORM - Membership year is from January to December

Please begin/renew my membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table
___ INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY membership - \$25.00
___ STUDENT membership or NEWSLETTER ONLY - \$12.50

*\$5.00 of each membership goes toward CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

Name _____

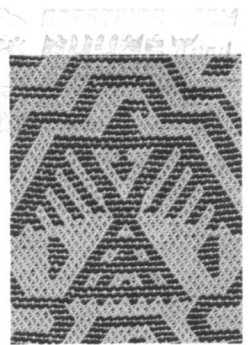
Phone _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

Bring this membership form and your check to our next monthly meeting,
or mail it to our P.O. Box below:

San Joaquin Valley
Civil War Round Table
PO Box 5695
Fresno CA 93755



Ho-Chunk bag USA37