BUGLE CALL ECHOES

Volume 5 Issue 6

June 1997

JUNE SJVCWRT MEETING

San Joaquin Valley CWRT treasurer Wayne Bowen will be the featured speaker at our June round table meeting. His presentation is entitled, "John Hunt Morgan and His Escape from the Ohio Penitentiary."

POTLUCK DINNER!

A - L bring casserole or salad M - Z bring dessert

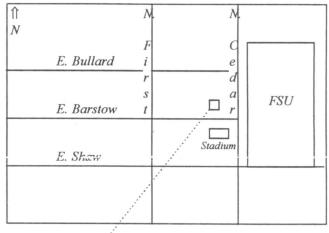
Wayne was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, and served in the US Navy from 1943-46. He attended Ohio State University after the war, graduating with a BA in History in 1948. Thereafter, he studied Spanish at Mexico City College, and received his MA in Spanish at Emory University, Atlanta, in 1953, and his PhD from Ohio State in 1958. Since then he has been in California. Before retiring, Wayne taught Spanish at UC Davis for 6 years and at Fresno State from 1964 to 1989. He has two sons, Juan and José, and two grandchildren, Ella and Naomi. Wayne and his wife, Nichole, live in Fresno.

The meeting will be a potluck dinner at the home of Bette and Bill Head, 1362 East Barstow, Fresno, on Thursday, June 26, 1997. Social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and the program at 6:30 p.m.

The SJVCWRT will provide ice tea, soft drinks and beer; BYOB if you prefer. Plates and eating utensils will be available. If your last name begins with a letter of the alphabet between A - L, you should bring a casserole or salad. If your last name begins with a letter between M - Z, please bring a dessert.

RSVP by calling Ken or Barbara Moats at 229-3654.

Plan to bring your family. We look forward to seeing you there.



1362 E. Barstow

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I'd say our May meeting was an unqualified success. Thank you all for your support at our new location. We had an excellent turnout. The Ramada Inn looks like a winner. The topic for the evening brought out several of our friends from the reenactor ranks and we are always happy to join forces with them. Fred Bohmfalk did an excellent job bringing to life a much-respected Southern leader from what Craig Symonds terms the second-echelon commanders. That is: Major General Patrick Cleburne, CSA, the fighting Irishman, who "established a reputation as a superb combat officer on every battlefield of the western army," and was literally "wasted" at the disastrous battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864.

Symonds' new book, a biography of Cleburne, has in fact just been published by the History Book Club. It was the Main Selection for either May or June.

Bill Head will be out of town just prior to the June potluck, which will take place at his house Thursday evening, June 26, at 6 p.m. Please call Ken or me, therefore, at 229-3654, to let us know if you're coming so that we can plan the set-ups. Wayne Bowen will be our featured speaker, so come on out to enjoy a Civil War summer evening. See body of newsletter for more details.

Barbara Moats

SOME REMARKS ON THE BATTLE OF GAINES' MILL, JUNE 27, 1862

by Ron Vaughan

Our Seven Days Battles study group has been enjoyable and I hope more members will take advantage of these groups in the future. My reading about Gaines' Mill and our discussion brought me new insights on this little battle.

After the repulse at Mechanicsville, it was clear that Lee's



Duryea's Zouaves

master plan had miscarried. Lee could have chalked it up to a missed opportunity and withdrawn back across the Chickahominy. It would have been the prudent thing to do, given the threat to Richmond by McClellan's Army. But Lee persevered with his plan. Shelby Foote wrote: "Lee no more considered turning back, apparently, than McClellan had considered moving forward(!!)"

Lee had about 65,000 men with 84 cannon vs. Porter's 30,000 and 124 guns. Lee followed up Porter's retreating Corps with three columns: Longstreet's division along the river road, A. P. Hill up the central road, and Jackson with D. H. Hill were to follow the Old Cold Harbor to outflank the enemy on the left. Porter's unexpected stand along Beaver Dam Creek meant that the Confederate forces had to engage in a piecemeal manner. This was compounded by Jackson's being late, when his guide took the wrong road.

Many authors make much of the strength of Porter's triple line of entrenchments as a cause for the failure of early Confederate attacks. However, the histories of the 5th NY and the 44th NY (two reenactment units I have been involved with) make it clear that there were no entrenchments at all on the Union left or right flanks. Only Porter's center was entrenched. Thus, it seems that the Confederate's piecemeal engagement was more of a reason for repulse. Also, there was the

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stubborn fighting by Sykes' US Regulars and Zouaves! Note: The volume of fire put out by the 5th NY was partly due to their having two companies armed with Sharps breechloaders and the rest using a "patent cartridge" that did not have to be torn open to load. Anyone know about these?

It was not until about 6 o'clock that Lee finally had all his units present and he decided to make a general assault. The battlefield fell silent for an hour until the attack began. This shows us how long it took to coordinate units in the pre-radio days. The success of this assault was due mostly to the ardor of the Texans and the Union fatigue, shortage of ammo, and fouled rifles.

The results of the battle were 6,837 Federal casualties (including over 2,000 prisoners) and 8,751 Confederate losses. Never again would anyone call Lee "Granny Lee" or suggest that he had "tenderness of blood." Porter had bought McClellan 24 hours to start his supply trains moving.

The above article is an outcome of the Seven Days Battle study group. Next month: Savage's Station.

JUST A THOUGHT

You may have seen the postcard on which pictures of 12 Civil War generals appear: Northern generals include Ulysses S. Grant, Philip H. Sheridan, George G. Meade, William T. Sherman, George B. McClellan and Benjamin F. Butler. Pictured for the South are Nathan Bedford Forrest, Robert E. Lee, Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, John Bell Hood, George E. Pickett and Joseph E. Johnston.

If you were selecting 12 Civil War generals to grace a postcard, which ones would they be?

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DISTANCE EDUCATION

The American Military University offers a Civil War Studies Program via distance education. This area of study allows students to concentrate on Civil War history to arrive at a 36-semester-hour Master's degree. AMU is a nationally accredited institution and has been providing distance education since 1993.

Distance education is learning that occurs between student and professor who are geographically separated. AMU students do directed self-study and research and have a one-on-one relationship with their professors through telecommunication. Course size is restricted to 20 students. There are also non-credit options available at a reduced cost.

For more information, contact the American Military University, 9104P Manassas Drive, Manassas Park, VA 20111, 703/330-5398. Their E-mail address is: http://www.amunet.edu.

CIVIL WAR ON THE INTERNET

Ron Church, who authored the excellent article on the Pipe Creek Line reprinted in the May newsletter, has forwarded the following information about Civil War sites on the Internet:

The first is a Civil War chat room at http://www.webamerica.com:8080/pyr/door.cgi. You can "listen" in or take part in the discussion. A lot of reenactors, some scholars and many who simply enjoy discussing any or all aspects of the Late Unpleasantness participate. Ron writes that sometimes conversations will stray off-topic, but "we generally do try to keep messages CW related." The webmaster is called ACEWEB and while they have a number of general chat "suites," the Civil War Forum sticks to that subject. Ron goes by the name "Buckshot." He invites everyone to drop in to say hello.

Additionally, there is "Shotgun's Civil War Home Page" at http://208.206.112.102/dweeks/. "Shotgun," who lives in Herndon, Virginia, and is quite knowledgeable on the subject of the Civil War, has been assembling information on this home page. Ron says "Shotgun" treats the CW about as fairly as you'll find anywhere and endeavors to be as unbiased as possible. Ron encourages everyone to check it out.

REMINDERS

- The next SJVCWRT board meeting is Thursday, August 7, 1997, at the Moats', 4780 North Delno, Fresno, beginning at 4 p.m. All round table members are welcome to attend.
- ➡ Membership year is from January to December. Dues are \$25 for a single membership, \$40 for a family, or \$10 for the newsletter only. Send new or renewal memberships to PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755. \$5 of each membership goes to battlefield preservation.
- ⇒ If you would like to <u>present a program</u> at one of the SJVCWRT's meetings, contact Rick Kubiak at 251-1505.
- Raffle items are always needed. If you have something to donate, see Ken Moats at a meeting or call him at 229-3654. Among the items that have been raffled in the past are books and magazines devoted to the Civil War, wine, restaurant certificates for brunch, and recipes for Civil War-era chicken dishes accompanying eoupons for fresh chicken.
- Coffee and Civil War will resume in the fall after a summer hiatus.

MAY MEETING

At the May round table meeting held at the Ramada Inn on Shaw, \$90 was collected through the sale of raffle tickets. Raffle prizes offered were *The Gettysburg Campaign* by Edwin Coddington; *Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West* by Glenn Tucker; a bottle of wine; and two Civil War magazines.

The money collected for the raffle drawings helps defray the expense of printing and mailing the newsletter. Your support of the raffle is appreciated.

THE SEVEN DAYS BATTLES

The discussion group concluded its study of the Seven Days Battles with a potluck at the Moats' on June 3.

The group will meet sometime in the fall to determine the dates of the next class and the topic of the discussion. We hope you'll join us.

BUGLE CALL ECHOES

STONEWALL JACKSON: BRILLIANT OR JUST COMPETENT?

by Steve Madden

Greetings to my comrades in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table. Following are some details of the 6th Annual Southern California Civil War Conference and the small part I played in it.

This great group of friends meets every spring. We met in historic San Juan Capistrano, Saturday, April 26, at the El Adobe Restaurant. The restaurant occupies an old courthouse and jail building and it's a short walk from the mission. We plan to meet there next year.

The conference included a panel debate on: "Stonewall Jackson: Brilliant or Just Competent?" There were three people on each side and the audience was left with many views to ponder. As one of the "brilliant" panelists, what follows is my version of the discussion.

First and foremost, last and always, a debate of this type is more lexicographical than historiographical. Simply put, the man with the biggest dictionary wins. Determining what is "brilliant" and "competent" can take an entire afternoon and many beers. Stonewall deserves better than to be beat up with a dictionary.

However, the topic requires the dictionary to set parameters, so it must be consulted. In my dictionary, "competent" appears as: "Having suitable or sufficient skill, knowledge, experience, etc., for some purpose; properly qualified." In other words, the stuff you put on a resume.

My dictionary defines "brilliant" as: "Having or showing great intelligence, talent, quality, etc." In other words, the stuff you put in a history book. And thus we have Stonewall: the stuff of a resume or a history book?

And so the argument begins. Certainly, Jackson showed skill early in the war in taking charge of the troops at Harpers Ferry. He turned a militia mob into a legendary brigade. He cleverly planned the capture of 56 locomotives and more than 300 cars that ran

through his lines. He planned the movement of his men to another field...

...and on this field he won a name.

As Stonewall said on his deathbed, the name belonged to the brigade and not to him. The fact remains that he helped stop a victorious Yankee force and continued to stop them until reinforcements arrived on his left flank to turn the battle's tide.

Critics claim that he held the wrong side of Henry House Hill. This is the first sign of a weakness--they say--to merely obey the precise orders "Old Fool Tom" was given by the greater men who commanded him. This relation of commander and commanded will be studied further.

His critics are partly right. He did hold--stupidly or stubbornly--the wrong side of the hill. The fact remains that he did hold, he never retreated and his forces tried to counterattack. Whatever the causes of Jackson's brilliance or God's blessings, Jackson's men were instrumental in winning the first Confederate victory.

From the blazing heat of Manassas to the freezing sleet of Romney, Jackson showed a preference for bringing war to the enemy. He also showed a trait a teacher might call: "Has a bad attitude and does not play well with others." Jackson failed to warm over his subordinates and inflame them with his fiery spirit. His failure froze the campaign just as surely as the weather.

However, from the misery of Romney came the brilliance of the Valley Campaign. Volumes have been written on this campaign that continues to enlighten soldiers and scholars. For skill in maneuver, speed in march and audacity in battle, the Valley Campaign is a valuable textbook. This alone bestows on Jackson the title: brilliant.

Critics say Jackson's Valley victories do not prove brilliance. Rather, they prove the incompetence of his opponents. Granted, Jackson's opponents--Milroy, Banks, Shields and Fremont--did not win the reputation Jackson did. However, Jackson didn't choose his opponents. He fought everyone he came up against and fought as best he could. There is no

evidence showing he would have fought anyone else any differently. If Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas were in the Valley, would Jackson have done differently? Would he even have cared?

While talking about these Yankees, let's consider some of their opponents. Grant beat Floyd at Donelson, Pemberton at Vicksburg and Bragg at Chattanooga. Sherman beat Polk at Meridian and Johnston in Georgia. Sheridan beat Early. Thomas beat Zollicoffer and Hood. 'Nuff said.

Alas, the brilliant fire of the Shenandoah was a sputtering spark on the Peninsula. The fatal delays at Mechanicsville, the misrouted mistakes of Gaines' Mill, the puny putterings of White Oak Swamp--his failures on the Peninsula are as extreme as his successes in the Valley.

Jackson's failures are clearly his. In a postwar letter to cavalry leader Wade Hampton, Lee said he didn't know at the time why Jackson didn't storm White Oak Swamp. After the many war years, Lee admitted that he still didn't know what could have stopped Jackson. Lee went to his grave not knowing why Jackson failed him.

The fact is that Jackson was frequently stopped on the Peninsula--and that Lee didn't know of the stoppage. As acute as were Jackson's failures, Lee's staff failed to superintend the many movements, advise the commanders and warn Lee of any problems. This failure of staff work, coupled with bad maps and bad commanders, led to the failure of a campaign that should have shone like the Shenandoah.

Despite his many failures, Jackson was entrusted to lead the suppression of John Pope. The trust Lee gave to a failed subordinate showed Lee's greatness. That Lee would continue to trust Jackson until Stonewall's death is the greatest proof of Jackson's brilliance. The author is a devout member of the Church of the Redneck Trinity: Jesus Christ, Robert E. Lee and Hank Williams. Robert E. Lee was the greatest man since Jesus Christ. If Lee didn't trust a general, he always got the man out of the way.

Jackson never got out of the way. He led the way.

While Lee's trust before the Cedar Mountain Campaign showed Jackson's brilliance, Stonewall proceeded to reveal his weakness for "not playing well with others." Jackson was court-martialling one of his best commanders when the campaign began; he wanted to court-martial half a dozen others before the campaign ended. All commanders—whether facing a court-martial or not--never knew what Jackson had planned or if Old Jack had any plans at all.

The clash at Cedar Mountain was one of those rare times when Lee's men outnumbered the Yankees--and the Yankees damn near won the fight. Strategically, Jackson was a jackass.

The bloody nose Banks got at Cedar Mountain set the stage for Lee's great Second Manassas Campaign. To start the show, Jackson marched 54 miles in two days. He destroyed Pope's supply base at Manassas.

The maneuvers that followed gave Jackson a chance to show his tactical skill equaled his strategical abilities.

Regretfully, he gave Brawner's Farm to the world and mourning clothes to the women of Dixie. Again, the Confederates outnumbered the Yankees but had to fight for a bloody standstill. The Yankees gained the name "Iron Brigade;" the Confederates gained tombstones.

The Confederates weren't alone in the tombstone department. The Yankees battered the sheepdip out of Jackson's line at an abandoned railroad and only Longstreet's assault reversed the slaughter. However, Jackson's men set the stage for Lee's greatest victory and followed up with the flank attack at Ox Hill, where 100 loaded wagons were captured.

Thus, 90 days after taking command of a retreating army with nowhere to retreat, Lee defeated two armies and was advancing into enemy territory. There were many reasons for advancing: Lee was two for two; he had the initiative; the enemy was under a new commander who had proved timid; needed supplies could be gained in Yankeedom; and a victory in Yankeedom would mean more than a dozen victories in Dixie.

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The common sense of the advance was met by the stupidity of the Yankees who remained at Harpers Ferry. By not attacking or retreating, the Yankees blocked Lee's supply line to the Shenandoah. Lee's common sense turned to calculated boldness as he divided his force in the face of a larger opponent. The result was Jackson's capture of Harpers Ferry and 11,500 prisoners, 13,000 small arms, 200 wagons and 73 cannon.

Again, critics reduce Stonewall's victory by saying that Grant captured 15,000 at Donelson and 30,000 at Vicksburg. To answer the critics, look at a map. Where is Donelson and Vicksburg compared to Washington City? Stonewall bagged an enemy in the enemy's backyard.

Jackson then joined Lee at Sharpsburg. He stood like a stonewall on the left flank, checking the enemy's main army on their own ground. Generalship meant little in the savage soldier's battle that raged in the Cornfield and the West Woods. Lee needed a man who could be pushed and shoved but would not run. His man was Stonewall Jackson.

The bloody stand on the left at Sharpsburg was met by the bloody stand on the right at Fredericksburg. Jackson supervised and approved his line. That supervision failed badly. Again, his strategic desire to attack the enemy was thwarted by his tactical failure to defend against an enemy attack.

Again, Jackson's failures saddened Lee but did not discourage him. Lee kept his confidence in Jackson as events would show. However, it is significant to note that when an opportunity for independent command arose in the winter of 1863, Lee picked Longstreet to lead the attack on Suffolk. Had Stonewall fallen so low and the Old War Horse reared so high that Lee had no choice? Clearly, Longstreet's performance at Suffolk was not Jackson's in the Valley. If Lee had a choice, what would Stonewall have done at Suffolk?

But there were no choices, only winter and hunger and the need for more men, more food, more supplies and more horses. And the winter begat spring and the spring begat rain and the rain begat mud and the mud begat opportunities. And spring in Virginia begat more war... ...and the war begat the pedestal and the grave of Stonewall Jackson.

Jackson failed to appreciate the significance of Hooker's flank march. He had to have the Yankees in his face before he realized that Hooker meant to kick his butt in the worst way. Happily, Lee meant to kick Hooker's butt, but how?

An attack in front meant attacking where Hooker wanted to be attacked. An attack on the right meant attacking through swamps and woods and everything God Almighty created to keep men from fighting. An attack on the rear meant crossing the Rapidan to get in the Yankee rear and crossing it again to attack them. Two river crossings were impossible. That left the Confederate left: that left Stonewall Jackson.

Jackson did what Lee wanted--he found a way to the Yankee right. Jackson did what Lee wanted--he planned to make the movement with enough men to whip all the Yankees south of the Rapidan. When Lee said, "Go ahead," he was expressing the well-earned confidence he felt for his right arm.

And so Jackson marched and Jackson attacked and Jackson surprised and Jackson failed. To be successful, Jackson had to do three things: his left had to cut the Yankees off from the river; his center had to seize the vital crossroads of Chancellorsville; and his right had to link up with Lee.

Jackson was aware of his failures and encouraged his commanders to continue the attack. He personally led the efforts to accomplish these many goals. He rode ahead of his men, leading, seeking, scouting, inspiring...and then he rode back.

And thus the story ends. Competence or brilliance ends with a ragged volley by frightened men in dark woods. What would have been or what could have been or what should have been is the history of fools. In his last military act, Jackson tried to force a brilliant result to a brilliant beginning. Better men have done less.

Steven Madden has authored a previous article for Bugle Call Echoes: "Reenacting History" in the June 1996 issue. He is a member of the Long Beach CWRT and reenacts with the 1st Texas.

CALIFORNIA AND THE CIVIL WAR

NOVEMBER 7-9, 1997----13TH ANNUAL WEST COAST CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

Sponsored by Civil War Round Table Associates

P. O. Box 7388, Little Rock AR 72217 (501-225-3996) / Jerry L. Russell, National Chairman Hosted by the Imperial Valley CWRT

Featuring Outstanding Speakers and a Tour to Fort Yuma HQs Hotel: Barbara Worth Resort, 2050 Country Club Dr., Holtville CA 92250 Registration Fee: To be announced

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Does Not Include Lodging. Call 619-356-2806 for Room Reservations, before 10/10/97. \$55 + tx/S or D (Limited Block of 60 Rooms) (Reserve EARLY!) (I-Net: bwresort.com)

Friday, November 7

5 p.m.

Registration

6 p.m.

BANQUET. "The Civil War In The American West." Dr. Alvin Josephy, Jr., The Smithsonian Institution, Historian & Author.

Saturday, November 8

8:30 a.m.

"Confederate California." Jim Stanbery, Harbor College, Los Angeles.

9:30 a.m.

"The California Column." Fred Crozier, Long Beach CWRT.

10:30 a.m. BREAK.

10:45 a.m. "Noah Brooks: Sacramento's White House Correspondent." Dr. Ron Rietveld, Cal State Fullerton, Historian & Author.

11:45 p.m. LUNCHEON. Speaker, topic to be announced.

1:00 p.m.

*Confederate Pathway to the Pacific. " Boyd Finch, Phoenix CWRT.

2:00 p.m.

Topic to be announced. Dr. Alvin Josephy, Jr., The Smithsonian Institution.

3:00 p.m. BREAK.

3:15 p.m.

"Johnston in California." Dr. Charles Roland, University of Kentucky, Historian & Author

4:15 p.m.

"Johnston's Journey to The South." Dr. Maxine Turner, Georgia Tech.

6:00 p.m.

COMMAND POST. (Cash Bar)

7:00 p.m.

BANQUET. "Civil War Journal." Craig Haffner, Greystone Productions*.

Sunday, November 9

8:30 a.m.

"Drum Barracks." Fred Crozier, Long Beach CWRT.

9:30 a.m.

"The Los Angeles Militia." Gene Armistead, San Diego CWRT.

10:30 a.m. BREAK.

10:45 a.m. "Fort Yuma." Speaker to be announced.

11:45 a.m. LUNCHEON. "Why We Study The Civil War." Dr. Charles Roland, University of Kentucky.

1:30 p.m.

Conference Adjourns

1:45 p.m.

OPTIONAL TOUR TO FORT YUMA.

*speaker tentative

Registration Fee To Be Announced

BATTLE OF ALLATOONA PASS

Few, if any, Civil War battle sites contain as many original landmarks, earthworks and undisturbed physical features as can be witnessed at Allatoona today. The battle which occurred here on Oct. 5, 1864, was an introduction to the ill-fated plans of CSA Gen. Hood who assumed command of the Confederate Army, succeeding Gen. Johnston, after the fall of Atlanta.

The battle was mandated by Hood's assault into Tennessee. With the main force of Sherman's army entrenched at Kennesaw Mountain, it was necessary for the Confederates to regain control of the strategic W&A Railroad pass and fortifications at Allatoona.

The mission of recapturing Allatoona Pass fell to Gen. Samuel French. Ironically, French foretold the outcome of the battle in his demand for surrender, referring to it as "...A needless effusion of blood..."

During the three hours of gruesome fighting, Sherman signaled, "Hold the fort; for we are coming...," but did not. Based on this erroneous information, French withdrew. The battle left approximately 1,500 casualties, an almost equal number of Blue & Gray.

Further irony: Sherman knew to avoid Allatoona in the Atlanta Campaign because of having visited the

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



Gen. Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson

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Etowah Indian Mounds in 1844. Remembering the 95-foot mountain cut through which the W&A Railroad passed, he knew Johnston's Confederates would be waiting for him there. Thus, he flanked westward and the Battles of New Hope and Kennesaw Mountain ensued.

Near Allatoona Pass, at the railroad crossing, you will find the grave of the Unknown Soldier, unknown even as to whether he died for the Blue or the Gray.

> reprinted from the Cartersville, Bartow County, Georgia, Convention and Visitors Bureau brochure

HARPERS FERRY

On June 28, 1997, Harpers Ferry Park will celebrate the many facets of its history with *Freedom's Birth: An American Experience*. One of the highlights of the day's activities is the dedication of the Shenandoah Street Restoration Project. The Dry Goods Store and the Provost Marshal's Office exhibits will return to their locations on Shenandoah Street.

Two new exhibits will also open: Officer's Quarters, which provides a glimpse of the accommodations a military officer might occupy during the Civil War; and the James Taylor Room. Taylor was a sketch artist for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.

