



## **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE BUGLE CALLS, May 2017**

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### **1. MAY 11<sup>th</sup> MEETING:**

Michael Gatley MD, speaking on

“The Impact of the Blockade on the South.”

Denny's Restaurant, 710 W. Shaw Ave., Clovis

6:00 pm Order food & Social Hour. 7:00 pm Meeting

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### **2. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

Once more into the breach. Hello all and I hope that all of you are doing well. This will be a short and hopefully sweet report.

Our meeting in April had Ron doing a good job on the organization and development of the aid for injured soldiers during the Civil War. It was interesting and very informative. As usual the Eastern Theater got most of the attention but there were concerted efforts in the west to take care of the troops. Both sides did what they could to keep soldiers alive but at the beginning of the war the situation was

overwhelming. I will leave off here because I am sure that Ron will give a good report.

Speaking of Ron, he and his relative are off on the east coast taking a couple tours and trying to see as much as they can in the time allotted to them. I'm looking forward in hearing about their adventures. I know that they will have had fun.

I will not be at our meeting this month. On Wednesday I will be flying to Norway and spending about a month there. It should be very interesting. So I will not be having a president's report in June. Hope to see all of you in August when Brian and Linda will have their annual summer get-together. Have a wonderful meeting.

Yours,  
Michael Green  
President SJVCWRT

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### 3. APRIL MEETING AFTER ACTION REPORT BY RON VAUGHAN

Twelve members were present (7 came from Tulare County!). What's up Fresno? Unfortunately, once again The Bee did not publish the event announcement I sent directly to the Editor! Low attendance may also have been due to our meeting coinciding with Maunday Thursday services.

Patti Spencer announced that we have successfully closed our PO Box. A forwarding address was filed. We were refunded \$55.50.

Gail was absent due to her mother being in the hospital. No word from her on whether or not she was able to get money refunded that we paid for last month's speaker, who wound up staying at a different hotel.

The Clagues said that they will host a barbeque at their cabin on either 8/12 or 8/26. A unanimous vote selected the 12<sup>th</sup>.

I presented a talk on THE US SANITARY COMMISSION & OTHER SERVICES. The following is a summary of it:

When the war began, the northern women looked for something they could do, even though they could not fight. Out of this feeling, was born the US Sanitary Commission. Its origin may be traced to a meeting of women on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1861, in New York. The result of this meeting was the formation of the Women's Central Association of Relief.

Plan after plan was considered, then discarded by the common sense of the leaders. Finally, Dr. Henry W. Bellows, pastor of the All Souls Unitarian Church of New York, advised them to find out what the Government would and could do, then attempt to do only those things Government was unable to do. The idea of the Sanitary Commission was an outgrowth of this.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, an unpaid commission was appointed, by the Secretary of War: Dr. Bellows, and 6 physicians, plus 2 Army Officers.

Their purpose was as follows:

1st. To inquire into the recruiting services in the various States, and by advice, to bring them to a common standard;

2<sup>nd</sup>. To inquire into the subjects of clothing, diet, cooking, camping grounds, and everything connected with the prevention of disease among the volunteer soldiers, who were not accustomed to the rigid regulations of the Regular troops;

3<sup>rd</sup>. To discover methods by which private and unofficial interest and money might supplement the appropriations of the Government.

An examination of the condition of the troops in both the East and the West was undertaken. Unsanitary conditions were found almost everywhere. At once, expert physicians were employed as inspectors of camps.

The effects of these inspections were almost invariably good. Once a commanding officer had the defects called to his attention, he was usually unlikely to make the same mistakes in the future. Also the regiment would be an example to other regiments.

The results of the inspections were condensed by physicians into three short treatises, and distributed to regimental surgeons and commanding officers. These little books were of great value. The third phase, that of relief, began with the care of the wounded and fugitives from the battle of 1<sup>st</sup> Bull Run. The work of the commission helped alleviate much suffering.

The Women's Central Relief Association of New York was emulated by similar organizations, called branches as part of the Sanitary Commission. The chief branches in the East were those in New York, Boston, Buffalo, and Philadelphia. In the West, there were branches at Cincinnati, Louisville, Chicago, Troy, Detroit, and elsewhere. Even far off California sent a large contribution in money.

The collection of supplies in kind was left largely to the branches, which were almost entirely independent of the parent organization. In all of these women were prominent. The branches collected such diverse items as: quilts, blankets, pin-cushions, butter, eggs, sauerkraut, cider, chickens, and many other things.

The standard set by the branch for the local aid societies was "A box a month for the soldiers." The Western Sanitary Commission was very efficient in relief work, and established, equipped, and supplied several hospitals.

Money was also needed to buy supplies. Much of the money was raised by Sanitary Fairs, which were fund-raisers, where items were sold. Some of which became national events, and lasted for weeks. Almost every conceivable variety of merchandise was sold. Women gave their whole time for weeks to prepare the objects for sale, and then actively worked the booths. Young girls also worked as waitresses, sold flowers, served at booths, to add to the fund "to help the soldiers." A list of items collected by one Women's Relief group,

during a 6 month period included: over 471,000 items of clothing, 291,000 bedding items, about 40,000 miscellaneous supplies, all valued at \$566, 831, plus over \$35,000 in cash.

The commission proved its value during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862. The Army was unable to deal with the increase in sickness, such as malaria and dysentery, due to the environment.

In the West, scurvy was prevented by the commission rushing loads of vegetables to the Army of the Cumberland and Grant's Army. In April 1862, the commission applied for the use of a number of idle transports. The first one assigned was The Daniel Webster, which was refitted as a hospital ship. In addition, agents of the commission working near the front, offered relief that helped save hundreds of lives. During this campaign, another facet of the commission developed. So many letters inquiring about the sick, wounded or dead soldiers were received, that a hospital directory was begun. Before the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1863, this directory included the names of the sick and wounded soldiers in every general hospital.

After the reorganization of the medical bureau and the resulting increase in efficiency, the work of the commission became largely supplementary. Nevertheless, through the end of the war, every Corps had a Commission Wagon carrying supplies such as chloroform, brandy, condensed milk, beef stock, bandages, and other articles of pressing need.

In the latter half of the war, the commission established a "home" in Washington to give lodging, food, and proper care to discharged soldiers. The staff were always ready to help soldiers to correct defective paper work, to act as agents for those too feeble to present their case to the payroll or pension office. The lodges were established near railway stations to give temporary shelter. In the West. Thousands were looked after, and kept from sharpers and other harmful associations.

During the war the commission received \$4,924,480 in money donations, plus \$15 million worth of supplies. Over 15,000 women

volunteered to help in camp kitchens and serve as nurses in hospitals. Dorothea Dix was the commission's Superintendent of nurses. In the West, Mary Livermore was a leader of the north-western branch, and Mary Bickerdyke established 300 hospitals.

Not as well known as the Sanitary Commission, the U.S. Christian Commission did an immense amount of valuable work during the war. It was formed in the Fall of 1861, from volunteers of the YMCA.

Throughout the northern states some 5,000 men and women participated. The volunteers were solicited to contribute their services in the proper distribution of supplies, and a large number of men were regularly employed under salary. Among the volunteers who went to the front, were a number of ministers, who offered great help to the wounded on the field and in the hospitals. They offered encouragement and sympathy to the wounded, and were joined by many ladies who served as nurses. The government gladly availed itself of their aid.

In addition to relief work similar to that of the Sanitary Commission, a large portion of its effort was directed toward improving the mental and morale welfare of the soldiers, as well as the physical. It distributed millions of Bibles, religious books, and tracts. In addition it bought and sent many copies of the better class of magazines to soldiers. In permanent camps, free reading rooms were established and stocked with newspapers. Writing materials and stamps were furnished free to the soldiers, and the agents urged the men to write home, and send a part of their pay.

The commission set up many coffee-wagons in competition with the sutlers, and also set up "special diet kitchens," where needed for convalescents.

During the war, the USCC raised 6.25 million dollars in money and supplies.

IN THE SOUTH, there was no government-endowed or well organized "Sanitary" or "Christian Commission. To perform the task of

aiding the soldiers, the women of the South saw it as their mission to stand in the gap.

All over the South, ladies met trains, and provided the soldiers with baskets of food, and hot, steaming rye coffee for traveling soldiers. They were invited into private homes and entertained. Housewives gave away their blankets to any soldiers who needed them...

Soldier's Relief Societies and Wayside Homes were formed in the communities across the South. Not much is written about their activities, except that which was kept in their records, or reported by the local newspapers.

The individual associations seem to have been very organized and the common practice was to immediately elect or appoint officers. Societies met in private homes, churches, schoolhouses, town halls—wherever was convenient. The many women's aid societies had serious objectives, and performed valuable services.

Country neighbors also formed sewing circles to make clothing for the soldiers. Cloth was woven by small hand looms, both cotton and wool. They also filled boxes with hams, sausages, dried beef, butter, bread, dried fruit, pickles, etc., which were sent on to the soldiers by their families.

The Charleston Mercury reported: "Surgeon-General Gibbes respectfully and gratefully acknowledges the patriotic response of the ladies to the suggestion to supply bandages.

As in the North, Southern Ladies raised money for the soldiers. The Charleston Mercury, January 5, 1861, reported: "The Columbia ladies are receiving contributions for the purpose of aiding in furnishing members of the rifle company with articles of uniform. Later, the paper also reported, that the Surgeon-General acknowledged the receipt of \$326 donated by Charleston ladies for the purchase of surgical instruments.

Mrs. W. W. Harlee mentions a fundraiser: “Twice we held entertainments to raise money for the soldiers—one, an exhibition of tableaux, was held in the house at Mars Bluff Depot, and the second was a fair, held in the “Goodwin house. This fair was quite a success, the articles for sale having been contributed by the ladies of the neighborhood.”

The Soldiers’ Relief Association of Charleston devoted its energies largely to procuring through the blockade the much needed medical supplies. The stated purpose of the Hospital Aid Society of Spartanburg, was “to provide garments, hospital stores, and other comforts for our sick and wounded soldiers, and secondly to furnish articles needed for our soldiers in the field—these objects to be carried out by voluntary contributions of money, material, and labor.”

Similarly, the Greenville Ladies’ Association in Aid of the Volunteers of the Confederate Army, stated, “firstly, to relieve the sick and wounded among the soldiers, by forwarding to them linen, underclothing, cordials, bed ticks, socks, etc., etc., secondly to make winter clothing for the Volunteers in the Confederate Army.”

As on the North, a number of ladies helped out in the hospitals, to aid in the nursing care, often in private homes rather than as official nurses in hospitals. Two ladies stand out for their service: Ella Newsome came to be known as “The Florence Nightingale of the Confederate Army. She was Chief Matron for the hospitals of the Army of the Tennessee.

Sally Thompson set up her own private hospital in Richmond. Her hospital had a lower death rate than any hospital North or South. In honor of her efforts, she was awarded the official rank of Captain. The only woman so honored.

In Summary, it is clear that women played a vital role in the Civil War.

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#### 4. CIVIL WAR HUMOR

FROM THE “BLUE & GRAY LAUGHING”:



(The Cincinnati Enquirer reportedly said: ) “A Republican gentleman of this city, in a recent visit to Washington, called on President Lincoln. In the course of the conversation, the visitor inquired if his excellency had not felt some alarm about the safety of the Capital, to which the President gave the following classic reply: ‘O. the Cabinet were somewhat alarmed, but I wasn’t skeer’d a hooter.’”

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## 5. NEW CIVIL WAR BOOK

*The Porter Conspiracy* By Gene Paleno, a CWRT member from Lake Co.

The book is the story of General David Porter. It details Civil War Partisan Politics & Treachery, fallout from the loss of Second Bull Run...

Available from Amazon.com

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PHOTOS FROM APRIL MEETING  
 MICHAEL McCARTHY, SPEAKER



