



San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table Bugle Calls, November, 2017

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2017

1. NOVEMBER 9TH MEETING:

Meg Groeling will discuss Col. Elmer Ellsworth, an interesting young man who was a friend and supporter of Lincoln. Meg is one of the few female CW historians, and is in the process of writing a book on Ellsworth. She also writes articles for EmergingCivilWar.com.

6:00 - 7:00-- Social Hour & Meals

7:00 – 7:15-- Business Meeting

7:15 – 8:30-- Program, followed by Book Raffle

**NOV. 10-12TH: WEST COAST CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
CONFERENCE, SACRAMENTO*

**DEC. 14TH CHRISTMAS PARTY*

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

By Mike Green

Hello to you all:

I hope that this round of the Bugle Call finds all of you health and getting ready for Thanksgiving and Christmas. I start this report with the realization that this will be my next to last president's report.

Elections will be coming up and after three terms, I have decided to let someone else take over the job.

I have mixed feelings about the past six years. The Round Table has been stable but it hasn't grown in size like I had hoped it would. With that in mind I am hoping that the next president will be able to increase our membership. On the plus side, I have been a part of putting on two West Coast Conferences, as well as a Town Hall meeting that has gained a nice amount of money that has gone to our battlefield of choice, Raymond Mississippi.

This could only be accomplished through the outstanding work of people like Ron and Linda Vaughn, Brian and Linda Clague, Walt and Gail Schulz, Lisa Peters, and Patty and Michael Spencer. Without these hard working members, the Round Table would not have accomplished anything during my tenure. Thank you to all of you.

Speaking of West Coast Conferences, Ron and I will be traveling to Sacramento to participate in this year's conference. We will be announcing that we will be putting on the 2018 conference in Fresno. The subject has been selected [the War in the Trans Mississippi], date has been set, speakers have been confirmed, hotel secured as well as a good rate for the rooms. Now all we have to do is to get people to come. There is still a lot of work to be done but I know that we will be successful in what we have set out to do.

Last month we had an excellent presentation by Mike Gately on the Red River Campaign of 1864. Mike did an excellent job, and we thank him for it.

With a little luck we will be having our annual Christmas get-together at Gail's house. More information in the next Bugle Call.

Last September I was lucky enough to travel to Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania where I studied the battle of South Mountain. While I was there, I also went to Antietam and Gettysburg. Last month I really tried to run myself into the ground by traveling to Mississippi and Tennessee for 13 days (yes I am gainfully unemployed, ie retired). I

flew into Jackson, Mississippi to see my friend General Parker Hills and got to view our newest project that the Round Table helped to fund, a fence line that would have been there at the time of the battle. More about that later.

I was in Mississippi for another Civil War tour put on by the Blue and Gray Educational Society. This tour covered the battles of Iuka, Corinth and Davis Bridge. It was an excellent program. My feeling has always been that if I am going to spend the money to get there, I want to pack in as much stuff as I can. This trip included following Sherman's Meridian campaign, the battles of Brice's Crossroads, Shiloh, Parker's Crossroads, Johnsonville and Fort Pillow. My rental car sat for four days while I was on the tour, but I still got almost 1000 miles on it when I turned it in at Memphis.

Now on to the Raymond Battlefield. I had the opportunity to join General Hills and his wife on a trip to Natchez, where he gave a lecture on the African American men in the Brown Water Navy. After that we headed back toward Vicksburg and stopped at one of my favorite eating places. Mr. D's, where you can get some of the best fried chicken you have ever eaten, (my mother made great fried chicken and Mr. D comes very close), then we went on to the Raymond Battlefield.

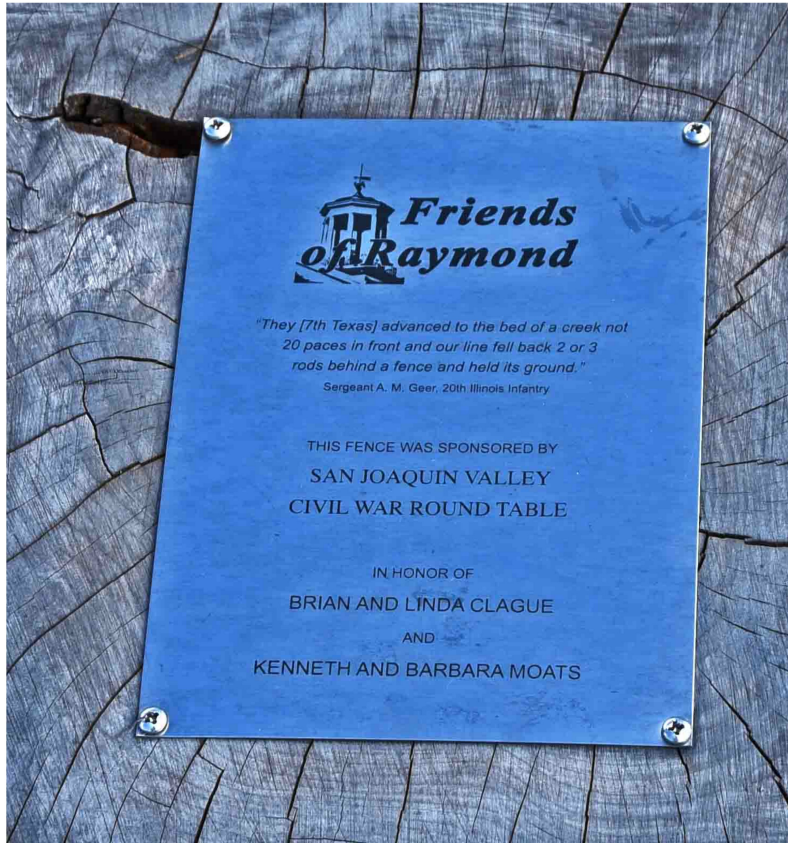
I will give you a step by step tour of the new fence that the SJVCWRT financed:



As we came into the field, that this year is planted in cotton, you get your first look at the fence that stretches across the field.



At the end of the fence sits a cannon and a very large cypress stump which holds a nice plaque with the information that this fence was sponsored by the SJCWRT, and honoring the Clague and Moats families.



Parker wanted to make sure that this fence would stand for a good long while, so he placed it to sit on stone instead of the ground, therefore reducing the likelihood of the fence rotting from contact with the ground (notice the hole drilled through the stone).



That hole is for the long piece of rebar that was driven through each wooden cross bar and through the rock down deep into the earth.



The fence line zigzags across the field.



Looking over the fence from the union side you can see the red marker in the tree line. This is the location of the Texas soldiers as they have come out of the creek bed.



General Parker Hills, the man most responsible for saving and interpreting the battle of Raymond.



"Your humble servant" with a thumbs-up for an outstanding job on the fence, and for the hard work of the SJVCWRT for funding the project (notice the red tablet in the distance).



Notice that the fence didn't run in a straight line. It followed the natural area that was dry, so that crops could be planted without sinking your equipment.



Parker was able to establish this fence line through careful archeological work on the land. Also notice that this area gives the Union soldiers protection while allowing them to enfilade the Confederate lines.



This is a picture of the fence from the Texas position.



Across the road is the Union artillery position. The SJVCWRT has sponsored two tubes in this line.

I hope that you have enjoyed this presentation of our contributions in action. Hopefully we will be able to raise money from our sponsorship of the 2018 Conference and make another contribution to the Friends of Raymond so that they can continue their good work.

Hope to see you on November 9 at Denny's on Shaw in Clovis. Dinner on your own at 6, and the meeting starts at 7.

Yours:
Michael Green President
SJVCWRT

3. AFTER ACTION REPORT

10/12/17 MEETING OF THE SJVCWRT, BY RON VAUGHAN

We had 13 persons present at the meeting.

Gail reported she received the \$2,000 donation check from Inland Empire CWRT to help sponsor our 2018 Conference. She said the book sales room will be next door to the meeting room and can be locked up when sellers not present. We get one free room for every 25

rooms booked, which will help defray our costs for speakers. Box lunches will be served on Saturday. There is no complimentary breakfasts offered. Free shuttle from airport, which is next door.

Christmas party will be at Gail's unless house is sold.

Club elections at the Nov. meeting. Mike Green is stepping down as President. Mike Spencer will step up from V.P. to President.

Mike Green announced he is leaving Friday for a long 3 week trip to visit battlefields at Raymond, Meridian, Tupelo, Brice's Cross Roads, Corinth, Shiloh, and Ft. Pillow. (A rolling stone gathers no moss!)

Michael Gately spoke about the Red River Campaign of 1864. He provided each attendee with a 22 page copy of the information he had gathered. His presentation summarized it very well.

The campaign was the plan of General of Chief Halleck, despite opposition from Grant and Banks, who desired to move east and capture Mobile. Ala.

The campaign had four goals:

1. To destroy the Confederate Army commanded by Taylor.
2. To capture Shreveport, La., CSA headquarters for the Trans-Mississippi Dept., controlling the Red River, and occupy east Texas.
3. To confiscate roughly a hundred thousand bales of cotton from the plantations.
4. To organize pro-Union state governments in the region.

The complex plan involved three Union armies: Banks' Department of the Gulf (20,000), which would march overland from southern La.; 10,000 men from the Army of the Tennessee under A.J. Smith starting at Vicksburg and moving up the Red River along with a gunboat fleet under Admiral Porter; and 7,000 men under Steele, moving south from Ft. Smith Ark. The vanguard of Banks column was led by General Franklin. This combination of two poor generals was bound to not end well.

The Confederate Dept. of the Trans-Mississippi was led by General Kirby Smith, who had at his disposal scattered forces: Richard Taylor's 10,000 in west La., Price's 11,000 in southern Ark., Maxey's 4,000 cavalry in the Indian Territory, and in Texas, Magruder had 15,000, of which he sent 8,000 that arrived slowly in various groups.

Eventually, Taylor made a surprise attack on the head of Banks' strung out column, throwing back the Union and disordering them. Banks decided to retreat. Hearing of this, Porter and Smith retired down the river also. The Union fleet narrowly escaped being trapped, due to the falling level of the river. Due to supply problems, Steele's little force turned back from Shreveport.

In conclusion, Banks was removed from command, and by the time the Federals got back to the Mississippi, it was too late to help Sherman or take Mobile. The failed campaign cost the Union 8,100 casualties, 57 artillery pieces, 822 wagons, 9 vessels, and 3,700 horses. In comparison, the Confederates lost about 6,500 casualties (they could not replace), 3 steam vessels, and 700 mounts. As a result of the perceived victory, Smith would unwisely support Price's plan for an 1864 invasion of Missouri, which would end in disaster.

4. CIVIL WAR HUMOR

From "The Blue & Gray Laughing"

This story comes from the September, 1861, siege of Lexington Mo. [by Gen. Price's 15,000 Missouri Secessionist vs Col. Mulligan's 23rd Illinois Regt ("Irish Bde.") and Union Missouri troops, totaling 3,500].

"During the siege, an old Texan, dressed in buckskin and armed with a long hunting rifle, used to go up to the siege works every morning about seven o'clock, carrying his dinner in a tin pail. Taking a good position, he banged away at the Federals till noon, then in an hour ate his dinner, after which he resumed operations till six p.m., when he returned home for supper and a night's sleep. The next day, a little before seven, saw him once again trudging up the street to resume his regular day's work, and in this style he continued till the Union surrender eight days later."

5. KEARNEY PARK CIVIL WAR REVISTED 2017

We did not buy a booth, but Brian was commissioned to do lectures at the Medical tent. We thought he would be able to put up our battlefield preservation banner, but the Historical Society forbid this. Brian did manage to hand out flyers advertising our Round Table.

Wayne was there as a General (not Lincoln), and Steve once again portrayed Jeff Davis. Mike Gately was promoted to Captain, with Johnathan and I serving with his Company of the 69th (Irish) NYSV.

With the highest temperatures in mid 80's, it was a great time to be wearing wool uniforms, and the public had an enjoyable time. The battles all went well. As usual, there was an abundance of CS artillery and cavalry, while the Union had only two cannon. The Confederate infantry btn. was smaller than ours, for the first time! Nonetheless, those "wascaly webbels" kept us on our toes, as they kept on trying to turn our flanks or exploit any gaps in our lines. Col. Erikson adroitly sent orders to parry each attempt.

At the end of one of the battles, the usual contingent of "widows" came out on to the field, searching for their wounded or dead loved ones. One such young mourner was crying over a soldier, when a second young lady approached, and began weeping over him. The first lady said, "Well who are you?" The second replied, "I am his girlfriend." So the first became mad and pushed the latter over! The second retaliated in kind, and a tussle commenced, until the recall sounded. Although it was a bit irreverent, I liked the creativity of these girls.

After the Kearney event, a lady posted a letter to the Fresno Bee complaining that we were "celebrating the horrors of war." I sent in a response, but so far (10/27) it has not been printed. It follows:

[Response to Harriette Wagner's Anti-Civil War Revisited Letter](#)

First of all, there is nothing in the Fresno Historical Society literature about “celebrating” anything!

The annual event is about remembering history! It is sad that so few students and adults have any real knowledge of American History. Thus, it is quite appropriate to include children in the audience, so they can learn about the past and maybe avoid mistakes in the future. Even poor readers can see living history and they remember it.

At the end of each battle re-enactment, the field is covered with “dead and wounded”. Taps is usually sounded and the “widows” come out to look for and weep for their lost loved ones. There is nothing celebratory about this scene, and would seem to make any war lovers, think twice.

Yes, war is horrible and to be avoided, but at times we must defend our freedom. The Civil War cost our nation the lives of 750, 000 men and women, white, Hispanic, Black, Native American, and Asians-- more than all of America’s wars combined. This tragic loss of life did keep the Nation united and ended the terrible practice of slavery. Those who protest the National Anthem seem to forget that the men and women who fought under that flag won our independence from Great Britain, freed the slaves, then later on, Federal Marshals and National Guards forced an end to segregation. Now that is something to remember, and celebrate!

Ron Vaughan