

BUGLE CALL ECHOES

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

FEBRUARY 2003 - VOL 11 ISSUE 2



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Welcome back everyone! Thanks to all of you who attended our January meeting, our annual "share and tell." We had a number of very interesting presenters who brought numerous items to share. We had uniforms, weapons, collectibles, books, and a letter for all to examine after the presentations. It never ceases to amaze me at the quality of our members presentations and the quality of the items that they bring. Considering that we are all so far away from the actual battle sites, it is amazing that we are able to come up with so many great items. If you were unable to attend last month, please be sure to make an extra effort to be there next January when we do it all over again.

This month, to celebrate Black History month, we will be treated to a presentation by Fresno's own Robert Snowden titled Frederick Douglass: My Escape from Slavery. This should be a wonderful presentation and I am looking forward to it with great anticipation. It is always nice when we can sponsor quality presentations by our members and others from the local area.

Once more I would like to emphasize the importance of growing the membership in our SJVCWRT. We have added four new members since the conference in November and we had five new guests at the January meeting. However, we truly do need new blood and new ideas to keep our organization vibrant and socially and intellectually stimulating. Please mention our organization to someone you know and invite them to a meeting. There are many people out there who would enjoy our group but they just don't know about us. Please spread the word.

Finally, if you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can improve the SJVCWRT, its organization, meetings, or publicity for our group, please see me at the meetings, call me at (559) 642-4204 or (559) 642-4203, or email me at carr@sierratel.com with your suggestions. All of your ideas will be considered and I'm sure many will be acted upon. This is your organization and we just want to make it bigger and better.

Tom

FEBRUARY 27TH MEETING

Robert Snowden will portray Frederick Douglass - "My Escape from Slavery"

Ramada Inn - Shaw at Highway 41 - No-host
Social Hour 6PM - Dinner 7PM (\$16) -
Program at 8PM

Mr. Snowden is an accomplished actor and singer, having appeared with the San Diego Starlight Theatre in such musicals as "Carmen

Jones" and Finian's Rainbow."

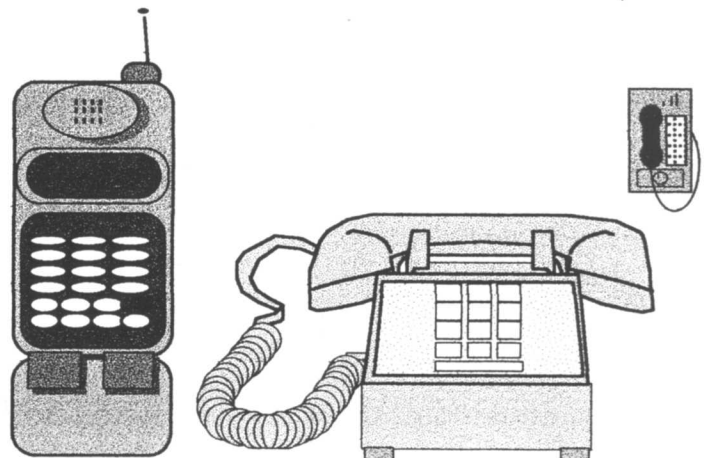
As an actor he has appeared in the controversial "Cat Called Jesus" and played Bigger Thomas in "Native Son" on PBS

television. Mr. Snowden is also a playwright; his stage play, "My Living Heritage," is performed annually in San Diego

during Black History Month. He has portrayed Frederick Douglass in San Diego and at the Fresno County Historical Society Civil War Reenactment for the last 12 years. He has previously given several excellent programs for our group.



FOR RESERVATIONS



KEN/BARB 229-3654

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COMING SOON: - MARCH 27TH

"10 Years in Search of the Real Marble Man"

Todd Holmes has spent 10 years learning about Robert E. Lee in order to portray him as faithfully as possible at the Civil War Reenactment. Most of this work examines the Lee mythology expressed chiefly by members of the Southern Historical Society.

LAST MONTH:

We had presentations from our members which included:

Tom Carr - Showed a replica of a Confederate sword and a copy of the fantastic new Encyclopedia of the Civil War.

Charles Jorgensen - Brought a book which was a copy of the minutes of the Richmond City Council 1861-65.

Jon Summers - Shared stories about his grandfather and displayed a Colt pistol and carbine that had belonged to his other grandfather.

Mike Herring - Discussed his long involvement and many experiences in the reenacting community, including participating in many of the well know Civil War movies. In addition he displayed his Confederate uniform and equipment.

Dave Davenport - Brought the diary of a Confederate soldier from Arkansas and discussed why a Confederate diary was rare. He also showed various artifacts and two fascinating books. One was a pop-up book showing various complex subjects and the other book of stereoptic pictures had a device for viewing the Civil War scenes.

Ron Vaughn - Shared with us a replica of a Civil War 12 pound cannon ball and described its composition, capabilities and use.

**It's still that time - 2003 Dues
Membership Form on the back**



BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

We received a very nice note from the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and we wanted to share it in part with everyone:

"The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust wishes to extend to you its sincerest thanks for your very kind donation of \$3,000. from the West Coast Conference, congratulations on such a successful event! It is the generosity of groups such as yours that inspires us in our efforts to save hallowed ground. As you know, we have previously acquired land at Fredericksburg as well as Chancellorsville. Our most recent acquisitions include two 20-acre sites on the Po River, our first acreage on the Spotsylvania Courthouse battlefield, and a 5-acre site (donated to CVBT) known as Grant's Knoll near the Wilderness battlefield. "

To cap off this nice letter the President of Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, John Mitchell wrote at the bottom of the letter:

"You all are unbelievable"



New Members: Bob Quist, Nancy Hatcher, John Pfost, and Michael Gatley

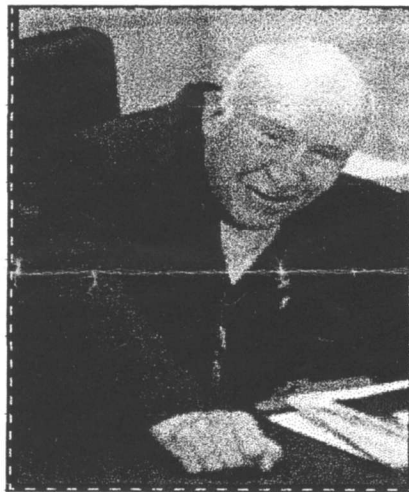
January Visitors: Mike Herring, Ron Aingle, Ward Whaley, Todd Holmes, and Roger Baehne

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His life changed forever at a place in the Pacific dubbed "Suicide Creek." A Marine in World War II, Edwin C. Bearss went on to be one of the most respected historians and sought-after battlefield guides in the nation. He is credited with locating and helping to raise one of the most significant artifacts of the Civil War, the ironclad gunboat Cairo. Referred to by many as a national treasure and acclaimed as one of the stars of Ken Burns's award-winning PBS series, *The Civil War*, the historian emeritus of the National Park Service will address the Civil War Round Table March 14 on Gettysburg and New Britain Island: The Plight of Casualties in the Civil War and in the Pacific in World War II.

"Of course, what I remember most is the day I got shot. It was on 2 January in 1944. The 3d Battalion 7th Marines in which I was a member of L Company, 2d Platoon and the 3d Battalion 5th Marines were to do a sweep in front of the lines at Cape Gloucester on New Britain," said Bearss.



"The creek itself is probably 10-15 feet wide. We don't know at the time the Japanese have dug their pillboxes into the side of the bank, on the opposite side, just below the lip. We can see several Japanese soldiers. We don't know whether they're decoys or what, but they seem oblivious to our approach. We check with the squad leader, who says, "Open fire!" So we open fire on them. Within a minute or less, all hell breaks loose. They are using the heavy Hotchkiss type, 7.7, the same as the French Army used in World War I. It feeds by a clip of about 30 rounds, and it has a rather slow cyclic rate of fire. We start to move down off the lip and down the creek bank."

"The slope is probably about 45°. I'm on my haunches when all of a sudden the gun immediately opposite me, about 35 yards off, starts firing. He's firing to my left and already getting hits. The first bullet hits me in the left elbow. It feels like a sledgehammer. Probably fortunately, it pulls me somewhat to the left.

The next round hits me in the right shoulder and lodges in my chest at about the tenth rib. In a matter of about five minutes, our squad alone is going to have five killed and six wounded, one of whom will subsequently die."

Ed says, "How did I get out? I'm lying downhill on the creek bank, and I don't know whether I have a left arm below the elbow, because it's twisted around, and it's numb. I know the shoulder wound does no nerve damage, because I can see the bullet hole there. So I lay there a while. Corpsman Hartman inches around and gives me a shot of morphine. There, they put me on a stretcher and just like you see them doing in the stills from World War II. And then, assuming that everybody smoked, which I didn't, the poor corpsman sticks a cigarette in my mouth. So I have to spit it out. The stretcher bearers have to haul me probably a half-mile to the regimental aide station, they strip me. Since I'm shot in both the lower and upper extremities, I'm in the same condition as when I came into this world: nude."

"I stay in the regimental aide station for two-and-a-half days. By that time shock has set in and I have very little memory of it. Probably the worst smell I ever smelled in my life, some guys haven't had a bandage changed in two-and-a-half, three days, like me. Nothing stinks like blood. Then I go to an evac hospital, which would be like a division hospital in the Civil War under Union surgeon Jonathan Letterman's plan. There they clean me up and put me in plaster of Paris casts that they used at that time."

Ed has since become interested in tracing how similar and how dissimilar the medical experience was between the Civil War and World War II. "First, in the Civil War I probably would have died of shock. But the plasma took care of that. To the lesser extreme, I would have lost my left arm in the Civil War and probably my right arm, too," says Bearss.

FROM THE CHICAGO CWRT MARCH NEWSLETTER ON
A FORTHCOMING TALK BY ED BEARSS

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MEMBERSHIP FORM MEMBERSHIP YEAR - JANUARY TO DECEMBER

Please begin/renew my membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table
My membership category is checked below:

-----Individual \$25 -----Family \$35 -----\$10 Student or Newsletter
\$5 OF EACH MEMBERSHIP GOES TOWARD CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

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Any Specific area of Civil War interest? _____

Bring this membership form and your check to a meeting or mail to:

SJVCWRT
PO BOX 5695
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