

BUGLE CALL ECHOES



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

MAY 2002

**"They that give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety
deserve neither their liberty nor safety" Benjamin Franklin**

May Program

Phil Avila was born in Oakland, California. He is a retired high school history teacher with a longstanding love of the Civil War history. He is past president of the North Bay Civil War Round Table and has spoken to several round tables on various battles and personalities. A highlight of his experience was being able to participate in the 125th reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1988. Phil and his wife Lyn have two children, Aaron and Rosey.

His topic in May will be "Brahmin Child Ebony Soldiers, Col. Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment." The movie Glory was based on this regiment.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, May 30th at the Ramada Inn located at Shaw and Hwy 41 in Fresno. Please send your check for \$15 made payable to the SJVCWRT to Glora Carter, P.O. Box 5695, Fresno, California 93755 or call her at 559-322-9474. We need a head count for the hotel.

President's Corner

On Saturday, May 11, Gloria and I attended the second annual Blue and Gray Ball sponsored by the Sons of the Confederate Veterans. The event this year was held at the country home of Robert Brooke, retired army general, just east of Clovis. The setting was wonderful and the weather pleasant. The evening began with a catered tri-tip and chicken dinner and ended with dancing under the stars. This is an event that should be included on your social calendar next year. It was truly great fun.

Our meeting this month will feature a discussion on the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, which was the subject of the movie Glory. Hope to see you at the meeting. **Mike Carter, Pres.**

David Davenport Will Speak At Conference

Dr. David Davenport, a round table member, is a past chair of the History Department at Fresno City College. He developed a curriculum and taught a course in Civil War history at the college. For several years he has been a member of the 6th Iowa Infantry of the Civil War Re-enactment Society. He takes part in the annual re-enactment at Kearney Park each fall.

Dr. Davenport will speak on Sherman's victory at Atlanta and its influence on the election of 1864.

Civil War Site Preservation

Let's not forget the outstanding work Jerry Russell and Heritagepac are doing for preservation. All of us who care about saving our battlefields need to support him. You can do this by sending a check for \$12.50 made out to Heritagepac, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217. Do it today!

July and August Programs

Due to falling attendance at our regular monthly dinner meetings the Board has decided not to hold meetings during the summer months of July and August. We will have a dinner meeting on Thursday, September 26. Also, you will not receive a newsletter during July and August.

House Divided

General Patrick Cleburne, CSA, had one brother in the Southern army and one in the Northern.

The troops of these strangely divided armies were taught tactics from the same book, written by Confederate General W.J. Hardee

Captain John Inglis, a captain with the Confederacy, led his Florida company on a valiant charge, overran the Federal guns, and accepted the surrender of their commander, his brother.

For the siege of Vicksburg, Missouri furnished thirty-nine regiments....seventeen Confederate and twenty-one Union.

RESACA, GA MAY 14-15 1864

On May 9, while US Major General William T. Sherman was probing CS General Joseph E. Johnston's position at Rocky Face Ridge, US Major General James B. McPherson marched the Army of the Tennessee through the unprotected Snake Creek Gap and advanced toward Resaca with US Major General Grenville M. Dodge's XVI Corps and US Major General John A. Logan's XV Corps, about 23,000 men. Sherman's orders on May 5 were for a "bold and rapid movement on the enemy's flank or line of communications." McPherson was to cut through the gap, destroy the railroad at Resaca, then retreat to the gap. When Johnston retreated from Dalton, McPherson was to pounce on him....

McPherson was cautious, and he missed his opportunity for a major victory. However, he had received no word from Sherman all day and was concerned that if Johnston had concentrated his entire army against him, he would be annihilated. McPherson recalled Dodge to the mouth of Snake Creek Gap to entrench and bring forward supplies. McPherson later explained, "If I could have had a division of good cavalry, I could have broken the railroad at some point." For the next two days McPherson remained in his defensive stance on the Resaca side of the gap and dug in his troops. On May 10 Sherman ordered US Major General Joseph Hooker's XX Corps to reinforce McPherson, to be followed the next day by the rest of the Army of the Cumberland, except for US Major General Oliver O. Howard's IV Corps, which continued to hold the Union position at Buzzard's Roost and defend the railroad. On the thirteenth US Major General John M. Schofield's army also moved into the gap.

Johnston used the time given him by McPherson to concentrate his forces at Resaca and to prepare the battlefield. The troops of Polk's Corps who had arrived from Alabama occupied the Confederate left, their flank anchored on the Oostanaula River. CS Lieutenant General William J. Hardee's Corps held the center along the high ridge overlooking Camp Creek. CS Lieutenant General John Bell Hood's Corps was posted on the right, his line running east to a hill near the Conasauga River.

On May 14 Sherman's army closed in, enveloping the Confederate lines from the north and west. Hooker's XX Corps supported McPherson's troops, while US Major General John M. Palmer's XIV Corps was on Hooker's left with orders to fight its way to the railroad. Palmer attacked at about noon, supported on his left by Schofield's troops and later by Howard's IV Corps on Schofield's left. The fighting was severe as Schofield and Howard drove the Confederates back into their prepared positions. Palmer's subordinates were unaware of these breastworks and took heavy losses in front of CS Major General Patrick R. Cleburne's position at the center of Hardee's line.

The heaviest fighting was near the headwaters of Camp Creek, where late in the afternoon US Major General Jacob D. Cox's division of Schofield's army drove the Confederate outposts over rough and wooded ground into their works. Two divisions of Howard's IV Corps later moved up to secure the position, opposite CS Major General Thomas C. Hindman's Division on the left of Hood's line.

At 6:00 P.M. Johnston launched a fierce counterattack from the Confederate right with two of Hood's divisions, supported by two brigades from CS Major General William H. T. Walker's Division of Hardee's Corps. Holding with his left, Hood executed a swing movement that enabled his right to advance about two miles, overrunning a round-topped hill just east of the Dalton Road that anchored the Union flank. The lead division of the XX Corps under US Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams rushed to the vicinity of Nancy Springs at dusk, just in time to repel Hood's assault.

The Union attacks succeeded on the right, led by a brigade of US Major General Morgan L. Smith's division of the XV Corps which stormed across Camp Creek. The fighting continued until dark, and McPherson's men held. Throughout the night the Federals dug entrenchments.

The attack on May 15 did not materialize as Sherman had planned. The rough, unknown terrain on the Union left slowed the deployment of the divisions of US Major General Daniel Butterfield and US Brigadier General John W. Geary. The configuration of the terrain gave the Confederates "unusual facilities for cross firing and enfilading," and the Union brigades were forced to attack in columns without adequate artillery support. The brunt of the Union attacks was borne by CS Major General Carter L. Stevenson's Division. In places the Federals advanced to within thirty paces of Stevenson's defenses. They briefly overran the "Cherokee Battery" of four 12-pounders, but the Confederate line held. A counterattack by CS Major General Alexander P. Stewart's Division later that afternoon against the Union left was bloodily repulsed.

During the day the Federals had laid Sherman's two pontoon bridges across the Oostanaula River at Lay's Ferry, about three miles below Resaca. US Brigadier General T. W. Sweeny's Second Division of the XVI Corps crossed the river and beat back an attack by a portion of Walker's Division. Once Sweeny's men had fortified the bridgehead, Johnston's position was turned. Johnston then concluded that he did not have enough troops to protect his rail line to Atlanta and at the same time hold his position and defeat Sherman. He crossed the Oostanaula that night, burned the railroad and damaged the wagon bridge, and headed for Calhoun.

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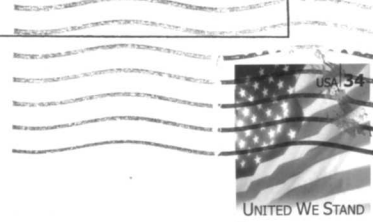
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Clip this membership form and send it with your check to the **SJVCWRT, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755**. The membership year is from January to December. Five dollars of each membership goes towards preservation.



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