



BUGLE CALLS, FEBRUARY 2020

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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1. FEBRUARY 13, 2020 MEETING:

PROGRAM: "THE RETREAT FROM GETTYSBURG" By Ron Vaughan

Denny's Restaurant: 710 W. Shaw, Clovis

6:00 Social Hour and meal

7:00 Meeting and Program

8:15 Book Raffle

2. COMING EVENTS 2020:

MARCH 12TH MEETING: Mike Carter as General Edward Porter Alexander (His last appearance was excellent!)

APRIL 4TH CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE IN TEMECULA (Gazette 665)

**APRIL 9TH MEETING: Bernie Quinn (Sacramento CWRT):
“Berdan’s Sharpshooters.”**

MAY 14TH MEETING: Illene Iverson, author of a book about her great grandfather Colonel Upton Hayes.

NO MEETINGS IN JUNE OR JULY

AUGUST BARBEQUE (Date to be announced)

3. PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:

BY MICHAEL SPENCER

Greeting’s All,

On this second month of 2020, we held our biannual elections. I am honored to be your President once again. Mike Green has agreed to be our treasurer, thank you to Gail Schultz for passing the torch.

Our next meeting will be February 13 @ 6:00 PM. We didn’t have a scheduled speaker for this month, but Ron graciously volunteered to speak. His topic will be “ The Retreat from Gettysburg “ along with a slideshow. In addition to this I did some research about Civil War prisons. I will give a brief synopsis of Belle Isle Prison.

A history lesson: Chaotic Beginnings of the Conflict:

SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA: First Battle Bull Run

On April 15, 1861, the day after South Carolina military forces attacked and captured [Fort Sumter](#) in Charleston Harbor, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation declaring an insurrection against the laws of the United States. Earlier, South Carolina and seven other Southern states had declared their secession from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America.

To suppress the Confederacy and restore Federal law in the Southern states, Lincoln called for [75,000 volunteers](#) with ninety-day enlistments to augment the existing U.S. Army of about 15,000. He later accepted an additional 40,000 volunteers with three-year enlistments and increased the strength of the U.S. Army to almost 20,000. Lincoln's actions caused four more Southern states, including Virginia, to secede and join the Confederacy, and by 1 June the Confederate capital had been moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia.

In Washington, D.C., as thousands of volunteers rushed to defend the capital, General in Chief Lt. Gen. [Winfield Scott](#) laid out his strategy to subdue the Confederate States. He proposed that an army of 80,000 men be organized and sail down the Mississippi River and capture New Orleans. While the Army "strangled" the Confederacy in the west, the U.S. Navy would blockade Southern ports along the eastern and Gulf coasts. The press ridiculed what they dubbed as Scott's "[Anaconda Plan](#)". Instead, many believed the capture of the Confederate capital at Richmond, only one hundred miles south of Washington, would quickly end the war.^[13] By July 1861 thousands of volunteers were camped in and around Washington. Since General Scott was seventy-five years old and physically unable to lead this force, the administration searched for a more suitable field commander.^[14]

McDowell's plan and initial movements in the Manassas Campaign

On July 16, 1861, McDowell departed Washington with the largest field army yet gathered on the [North American](#) continent, about 35,000 men (28,452 effectives).^[6] McDowell's plan was to move westward in three columns and make a diversionary attack on the Confederate line at [Bull Run](#) with two columns, while the third column moved around the Confederates' right flank to the south, cutting the railroad to [Richmond](#) and threatening the rear of the Confederate army. He assumed that the Confederates would be forced to abandon Manassas Junction and fall back to the [Rappahannock River](#), the next defensible line in Virginia, which would relieve some of the pressure on the U.S. capital.^[20] McDowell had hoped to have his army at Centreville by 17 July, but the troops, unaccustomed to marching, moved in starts and stops. Along the route soldiers often broke ranks to wander off to pick apples or blackberries or to get water, regardless of the orders of their officers to remain in ranks.^[21]

The [Confederate Army of the Potomac](#) (21,883 effectives)^[22] under Beauregard was encamped near Manassas Junction, approximately 25 miles (40 km) from the United States capital. McDowell planned to attack this numerically inferior enemy army. Union [Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson](#)'s 18,000 men engaged Johnston's force (the [Army of the Shenandoah](#) at 8,884 effectives, augmented by Maj. Gen. [Theophilus H. Holmes](#)'s [brigade](#) of 1,465^[22]) in the [Shenandoah Valley](#), preventing them from reinforcing Beauregard.

After two days of marching slowly in the sweltering heat, the Union army was allowed to rest in [Centreville](#). McDowell reduced the size of his army to approximately 31,000 by dispatching Brig. Gen. [Theodore Runyon](#) with 5,000 troops to protect the army's rear. In the meantime, McDowell searched for a way to [outflank](#) Beauregard, who had drawn up his lines along Bull Run. On July 18, the Union commander sent a [division](#) under Brig. Gen. [Daniel Tyler](#) to pass on the Confederate right (southeast) flank. Tyler was drawn into a [skirmish at Blackburn's Ford](#) over Bull Run and made no headway. Also on the morning of 18 July Johnston had received a telegram suggesting he go to Beauregard's assistance if possible. Johnston marched out of Winchester about noon, while Stuart's cavalry screened the movement from Patterson. Patterson was completely deceived. One hour after Johnston's departure Patterson telegraphed Washington, "I

have succeeded, in accordance with the wishes of the General-in-Chief, in keeping General Johnston's force at Winchester."^[23]

For the maneuver to be successful McDowell felt he needed to act quickly. He had already begun to hear rumors that Johnston had slipped out of the valley and was headed for Manassas Junction. If the rumors were true, McDowell might soon be facing 34,000 Confederates, instead of 22,000. Another reason for quick action was McDowell's concern that the ninety-day enlistments of many of his regiments were about to expire. "In a few days I will lose many thousands of the best of this force", he wrote Washington on the eve of battle. In fact, the next morning two units of McDowell's command, their enlistments expiring that day, would turn a deaf ear to McDowell's appeal to stay a few days longer. Instead, to the sounds of battle, they would march back to Washington to be mustered out of service.^[24]

Becoming more frustrated, McDowell resolved to attack the Confederate left (northwest) flank instead. He planned to attack with Brig. Gen. [Daniel Tyler](#)'s division at the [Stone Bridge](#) on the [Warrenton Turnpike](#) and send the divisions of Brig. Gens. [David Hunter](#) and [Samuel P. Heintzelman](#) over Sudley Springs Ford. From here, these divisions could outflank the Confederate line and march into the Confederate rear. The brigade of [Col. Israel B. Richardson](#) (Tyler's Division) would harass the enemy at Blackburn's Ford, preventing them from thwarting the main attack. Patterson would tie down Johnston in the Shenandoah Valley so that reinforcements could not reach the area. Although McDowell had arrived at a theoretically sound plan, it had a number of flaws: it was one that required synchronized execution of troop movements and attacks, skills that had not been developed in the nascent army; it relied on actions by Patterson that he had already failed to take; finally, McDowell had delayed long enough that Johnston's Valley force, who had trained under [Stonewall Jackson](#), was able to board trains at [Piedmont Station](#) and rush to Manassas Junction to reinforce Beauregard's men.^[25]

Prelude to battle

On July 19–20, significant reinforcements bolstered the Confederate lines behind Bull Run. Johnston arrived with all of his army, except for the troops of Brig. Gen. [Kirby Smith](#), who were still in transit. Most of the new arrivals were posted in the vicinity of Blackburn's Ford, and Beauregard's plan was to attack from there to the north toward Centreville. Johnston, the senior officer, approved the plan. If both of the armies had been able to execute their plans simultaneously, it would have resulted in a mutual counterclockwise movement as they attacked each other's left flank.^[26]

McDowell was getting contradictory information from his intelligence agents, so he called for the balloon [Enterprise](#), which was being demonstrated by Prof. [Thaddeus S. C. Lowe](#) in Washington, to perform aerial reconnaissance.

On the morning of July 21, 1861, McDowell sent the divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman (about 12,000 men) from Centreville at 2:30 a.m., marching southwest on the Warrenton Turnpike and then turning northwest toward [Sudley Springs](#) to get around the Confederates left. Tyler's division (about 8,000) marched directly toward the Stone Bridge. The inexperienced units immediately developed logistical problems. Tyler's division blocked the advance of the main flanking column on the turnpike. The later units found the approach roads to Sudley Springs were inadequate, little more than a cart path in some places, and did not begin fording Bull Run until 9:30 a.m. Tyler's men reached the Stone Bridge around 6 a.m.^[28]

At 5:15 a.m., Richardson's brigade fired a few artillery rounds across Mitchell's Ford on the Confederate right, some of which hit Beauregard's headquarters in the [Wilmer McLean](#) house as he was eating breakfast, alerting him to the fact that his offensive battle plan had been preempted. Nevertheless, he ordered [demonstration attacks](#) north toward the Union left at Centreville. Bungled orders and poor communications prevented their execution. Although he intended for Brig. Gen. [Richard S. Ewell](#) to lead the attack, Ewell, at Union Mills Ford, was simply ordered to "hold ... in readiness to advance at a moment's notice". Brig. Gen. [D.R. Jones](#) was supposed to attack in support of Ewell, but found himself moving forward alone.

Holmes was also supposed to support, but received no orders at all.^[29]

All that stood in the path of the 20,000 Union soldiers converging on the Confederate left flank were Col. [Nathan "Shanks" Evans](#) and his reduced brigade of 1,100 men.^[32] Evans had moved some of his men to intercept the direct threat from Tyler at the bridge, but he began to suspect that the weak attacks from the Union brigade of Brig. Gen. [Robert C. Schenck](#) were merely feints. He was informed of the main Union flanking movement through Sudley Springs by Captain [Edward Porter Alexander](#), Beauregard's signal officer, observing from 8 miles (13 km) southwest on Signal Hill. In the first use of [wig-wag semaphore signaling](#) in combat, Alexander sent the message "Look out for your left, your position is turned."^[33] Evans hastily led 900 of his men from their position fronting the Stone Bridge to a new location on the slopes of Matthews Hill, a low rise to the northwest of his previous position.^[32]

The Confederate delaying action on Matthews Hill included a spoiling attack launched by [Major Roberdeau Wheat](#)'s 1st Louisiana Special Battalion, "[Wheat's Tigers](#)". After Wheat's command was thrown back, and Wheat seriously wounded, Evans received reinforcement from two other brigades under Brig. Gen. [Barnard Bee](#) and Col. [Francis S. Bartow](#), bringing the force on the flank to 2,800 men.^[32] They successfully slowed Hunter's lead brigade (Brig. Gen. [Ambrose Burnside](#)) in its attempts to ford Bull Run and advance across Young's Branch, at the northern end of [Henry House Hill](#). One of Tyler's brigade commanders, Col. [William Tecumseh Sherman](#), crossed at an unguarded ford and struck the right flank of the Confederate defenders. This surprise attack, coupled with pressure from Burnside and Maj. [George Sykes](#), collapsed the Confederate line shortly after 11:30 a.m., sending them in a disorderly retreat to Henry House Hill.^[34]

Union retreat

The retreat was relatively orderly up to the Bull Run crossings, but it was poorly managed by the Union officers. A Union wagon was overturned by artillery fire on a bridge spanning Cub Run Creek and incited panic in McDowell's force. As the soldiers streamed

uncontrollably toward Centreville, discarding their arms and equipment, McDowell ordered Col. [Dixon S. Miles](#)'s division to act as a rear guard, but it was impossible to rally the army short of Washington. In the disorder that followed, hundreds of Union troops were taken prisoner. Wagons and artillery were abandoned, including the 30-pounder Parrott rifle, which had opened the battle with such fanfare. Expecting an easy Union victory, the wealthy elite of nearby Washington, including congressmen and their families, had come to picnic and watch the battle. When the Union army was driven back in a running disorder, the roads back to Washington were blocked by panicked civilians attempting to flee in their carriages.^[47] The pell mell retreat became known in the Southern press as "The Great Skedaddle."^{[48][49]}

Since their combined army had been left highly disorganized as well, Beauregard and Johnston did not fully press their advantage, despite urging from [Confederate President Jefferson Davis](#), who had arrived on the battlefield to see the Union soldiers retreating. An attempt by Johnston to intercept the Union troops from his right flank, using the brigades of Brig. Gens. [Milledge L. Bonham](#) and [James Longstreet](#), was a failure. The two commanders squabbled with each other and when Bonham's men received some artillery fire from the Union rear guard, and found that Richardson's brigade blocked the road to Centreville, he called off the pursuit.^[50]

In Washington President Lincoln and members of the cabinet waited for news of a Union victory. Instead, a telegram arrived stating "General McDowell's army in full retreat through Centreville. The day is lost. Save Washington and the remnants of this army." The tidings were happier in the Confederate capital. From the battlefield President Davis telegraphed Richmond, "We have won a glorious but dear-bought victory. Night closed on the enemy in full flight and closely pursued."^[51]

Aftermath--Brief observations

First Bull Run was a clash between relatively large, ill-trained bodies of recruits, led by inexperienced officers. Neither army commander was able to deploy his forces effectively; although nearly 60,000 men were present at the battle, only 18,000 had actually been engaged. Although McDowell had been active on the battlefield, he had

expended most of his energy maneuvering nearby regiments and brigades, instead of controlling and coordinating the movements of his army as a whole. Other factors contributed to McDowell's defeat: Patterson's failure to hold Johnston in the valley; McDowell's two-day delay at Centreville; allowing Tyler's division to lead the march on 21 July thus delaying the flanking divisions of Hunter and Heintzelman; and the 2 1/2-hour delay after the Union victory on Matthews' Hill, which allowed the Confederates to bring up reinforcements and establish a defensive position on Henry Hill. On Henry Hill Beauregard had also limited his control to the regimental level, generally allowing the battle to continue on its own and only reacting to Union moves. Johnston's decision to transport his infantry to the battlefield by rail played a major role in the Confederate victory. Although the trains were slow and a lack of sufficient cars did not allow the transport of large numbers of troops at one time, almost all of his army arrived in time to participate in the battle. After reaching Manassas Junction, Johnston had relinquished command of the battlefield to Beauregard, but his forwarding of reinforcements to the scene of fighting was decisive.^[52] Jackson and Bee's brigades had done the largest share of fighting in the battle; Jackson's brigade had fought almost alone for four hours and sustained over 50% casualties.

4. AFTER ACTION REPORT: SJVCWRT MEETING OF JANUARY 9TH. BY RON VAUGHAN, SECRETARY

Ten persons were present for our first meeting of 2020. Dues of \$35 per family were collected by Treasurer Gail. She reported our bank balance is \$1080.

Election for 2020 officers: Gail is resigning as Treasurer, after 12 years service (she assisted her husband with the duties). Michael Green agreed to become the new Treasurer. The other officers agreed to continue: President Michael Spencer, VP Patricia Spencer, Secretary Ron Vaughan, Member at Large Brian Clague. The members present unanimously voted to elect this slate of officers to the Board of Directors. Gail turned over the Treasurer materials for Mike Green.

SHOW & TELL PROGRAM:

Helen shared there is a book sale Jan. 31st-Feb 1st at the Bella Rodriguez Library, 1st & Shields. \$5 for a bag of books!

Ron showed several Civil War replica flags, asking the members to guess what they were. Also, several original and replica belt buckles. The one with the most correct answers was Wayne Scott, who won a \$15 gift certificate to Starbucks. 2nd place was Jason Cheng, who received a \$10 Starbucks gift certificate.

Mike Carter brought a book on the battle of Belmont, 11/7/1861. He mentioned that this small battle was the first action for several who became famous generals, Grant, Pillow, Cheatham, and McPherson.

Wayne Scott was dressed in his full Abe Lincoln outfit, plus a special cane. He displayed a number of 8 x 10 photos from Civil War re-enactments, and copies of original photos.

In the book raffle, Tom Ebert won a book, "38 Noses", about the 1864 Sioux uprising. He explained that Nicolay was there, and also how Lincoln examined the trial verdicts, and pardoned all the Indians sentenced, except those 38 that participated in atrocities.

5. CIVIL WAR HUMOR:

FROM "THE BLUE & GRAY LAUGHING"

"Lovie the artist records this verse at Lick Creek Bottom, between Pittsburg Landing and Monterey:

'This road is impassable,

Not even Jackassable!"

6. SPECIAL NEWS ON CIVIL WAR HISTORIANS:

Well known Civil War historian James “Bud” Robertson Jr. passed away in November, at the age of 89. He was the distinguished professor at Virginia Tech for 44 years, author and speaker. He wrote more than 20 books, with the best known, his 1997 “Stone Wall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend.”

Famous Civil War historian and tour guide Ed Bearss is 97! He is still participating in tours, but his last couple have been from a wheel chair pushed by his daughter. In the 2019 annual Gettysburg re-enactor parade, Ed was present as a spectator in his wheelchair. It turned into an “Ed Bearss parade” as each unit passing, honored Ed with a salute. It was very moving to witness this.