

BUGLE CALLS, MAY 2018 SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE



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1. MAY 10th MEETING, DENNY'S RESTAURANT, 710 W. SHAW, CLOVIS

6:00 pm Meal and Social Hour

7:00 Meeting

7:15 Program: Michael Spencer will speak about
Civil War during the Winters.

8: 00 Book Raffle

2. COMING EVENTS:

*No meetings in June or July

*August Barbeque at the Clague's Cabin, Shaver Lake (date
TBA)

*SEPTEMBER 13TH MEETING, Dana Lombardy will speak on his book about U.S. Grant, plus a book giveaway.

*OCTOBER 11TH MEETING, Speaker not yet determined

*NOVEMBER 8TH MEETING, Speaker??

*NOV. 9-11 WEST COAST CWRT CONFERENCE, FRESNO

3. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Greetings,

I'm excited to speak during next month's meeting. I have found several articles about the civil war winters and the effects on the soldiers during those times, mostly on the web. I went to the Cedar branch library, that was a dead end. Hopefully I'll find better information in books at a different location. Research in progress...

Regards,
Michael Spencer

4. AFTER ACTION REPORT, 4/12/15 MEETING OF SJVCWRT BY RON VAUGHAN

Twelve persons were present at the meeting. It was great to see the Clagues again! As usual, the Fresno Bee failed to post the notice of our meeting. Patty will try to post notices in the Libraries.

Michael Spencer reported he is working on expanding our Facebook page.

Ron V proposed that a few persons who are working at the Conference, (registration and raffle ticket sales) be eligible for reduced a fee, 25 to 50% off. The motion was passed.

Mike Green announced that historian and tour guide Ed Bearss was injured in a fall, and he is recovering.

The Clagues will host the annual barbecue at their cabin in August, date to be determined later.

Dana Lombardy will speak to us in September, about his book on Grant's campaigns. Dana is a publisher and historian, who has appeared on various TV history programs.

Ron presented a preview of the November Conference, an introduction to the Trans-Mississippi Theater. Several historians have acknowledged that this theater has been neglected by writers. I believe there are no more than 4 dozen books on the battles and campaigns of the war in this region. Only Professor Thomas Cutrer's book, A Separate Theater, covers the entire subject. (He will be attending the conference.) Cutrer contends that this over-looked theater was an area of tremendous significance.

Geographic factors:

It's 600,000 square miles comprised more than half of the Confederate States landmass. The region was sparsely settled, with much of it having only 7 to 18 persons per square mile. The white population was over 2 million, of which 480,000 were of men of military age. Of these 201,000 served in the Confederate Army and 157,000 in the U.S. Army. Also, there were 680,000 slaves, of which about 40,000 enlisted in the Union Army.

Production:

The area was said to be one of the most productive on the globe. La. And Tex. Had a "burgeoning cotton culture". La.'s production of sugar, molasses, and rice was the largest on the North American mainland. Missouri produced more corn than any other Southern state, the region raised

significant quantities of wheat, oats, and hogs, more than other parts of the South.

Over 3.5 million beef cattle ranged the plains of Texas, more than any other state. The region was also rich in horses, between ½ and 3 times more horses than men of military age.

The region featured salt mines in Kansas, Missouri, and Louisiana. It was said the region possessed nearly all the minerals necessary for the manufacture of war materials. But the South had limited manufacturing, and this theater had even less manufacturing. It had a total of 6,000 factories and mills, employing 34,000 workers. In comparison, New York or Pennsylvania each had 22,000 manufacturing establishments, employing 220,000 workers. Except for New Orleans, which was soon lost, there were only a few small and scattered textile factories.

The theater had six pre-war Government arsenals for repairing and storing arms and cannon. During the war, the total production never exceeded 800 weapons per month. Despite shipments from the eastern Confederacy and arms smuggled in via Matamoros, there was always a shortage of weapons for Southern armies in the region.

Historian Robert Kirby opined that the Confederacy was an immature economy, unready for an unlimited war. He wrote that it was an 18th Century country, trying to support and 19th Century army, in an effort to win what was in many ways the first 20th Century war.

Operational challenges:

The Union domination of the Mississippi River made it a threat all the eastern part of the Confederate Theater.

Texas's Rio Grande frontier offered the Confederacy's only border with a foreign nation, giving a trade doorway to the

world, after other Southern ports were blockaded. French occupation of Mexico offered a potential ally for the Confederacy.

The region also offered the tantalizing possibility of access to the fabulous gold and silver mines of the West.

Transportation:

The region had some mountain ranges that interfered with transportation: The Ozarks, the Boston Mtns., Ouachita Mtns., and the hills of western Louisiana.

The region had a few and very limited rail lines. Rivers were of limited use: The Mississippi ran along the eastern border, but except for St. Louis and New Orleans, there were no important points along it. There were no other important cities that were hubs of transportation. The Arkansas River and the Red River were only navigable during the rainy Winter and Spring months.

The main road for transportation was the Wire Road, that ran from St. Louis to Ft. Smith, Ark. But it was only a rough dirt road, full of holes, rocks and even stumps. The lack of good transportation routes created logistical nightmares, with campaigns lost because of the impossibility of getting supplies through to the troops. In fact, despite the bountiful crops and livestock in the region, Confederate troops were usually hungry, due to the lack of wagons and decent roads to get the supplies to the soldiers.

Union and Confederate forces in the field were often scattered over the vast region. Seldom did an army of more than 10,000 take the field.

The Trans-Mississippi soldiers were unique. According to Steven Woodworth, the close proximity to the Frontier, plus the relatively recent statehood of many states, resulted in the Trans-Mississippi and North-Western troops tending to

be tougher, more hardy, and more self-reliant, than many soldiers that grew up in the more settled Eastern States. It is interesting that the theater furnished the Confederacy with some of its premiere fighting units: Hood's Texas Bde. (Lee's Grenadier Guards), The Louisiana Bde.n (Lee's Tigers), the 1st Missouri Bde., and the 8th Texas Cavalry.

Let's not forget the famous Western units in the Army of the Potomac, such as the hard fighting Iron Bde. (Wisconsin & Indiana) and the 1st Minnesota Regt.

Unlike the shoulder to shoulder tactics of the Eastern and Western armies, even in the earliest fighting in this theater, the soldiers on both sides would take advantage of any available cover, and often load and fire from a prone position.

The classic image of the "Ragged Reb" was especially true of those in the Trans-Mississippi. Also, they were very poorly armed, most having only shotguns, squirrel rifles, or old smooth-bore muskets. 2,000 Missourians were totally unarmed at the battles of Carthage and Wilson's Creek. The ubiquitous Confederate battle flag, was seldom seen in this theater.

In contrast to other theaters, in the Trans-Mississippi, the Confederates usually out-numbered the Union in men and artillery pieces.

The first African-American Regiment was not the famous 54th Mass., but the 1st Kansas Colored Regt., raised in 1862 and fought its first action at Island Mound, Mo. In Oct., 1862.

Also, many Native Americans fought in the theater, for the North, for the South, and tribe vs tribe.

5. CIVIL WAR HUMOR

From "The Blue & Gray Laughing"

A sketch in Harper's Weekly, April 22, 1865, depicted two veterans, one Black and one white, on crutches, with a leg missing. They are shaking hands and the white vet says: "Give me your hand comrade! We have each lost a leg for the good cause: but, thank God, we never lost heart."