
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

**BUGLE CALLS
NEWSLETTER**

MARCH, 2019



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**1. MARCH 14th MEETING
DENNY'S RESTAURANT
710 W. SHAW AVE., CLOVIS**

6:00 Dinner & social hour

7:00 Meeting

Program: Michael Spencer will speak about Civil War Weapons.

2. UPCOMING EVENTS

*March 2-3, Civil War Re-enactment at Mooney Grove Park,
Visalia

*March 14th, SJVCWRT Meeting

3. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings,

In the newsletter for January I mentioned a snippet about firearms during the civil war. I thought it best to speak more on the subject for the March 14th meeting.

Below is a tidbit of info I found. Though there was a range of weapons used during the civil war, I happened to come across an article on grenades, from history.net, by Joseph G. Bilby. I thought that this would nice to share. It's not the full article just an excerpt.

Regards,
Michael Spencer

Grenade!: The Little-Known Weapon of the Civil War

By Joseph G. Bilby

It was akin to shooting fish in a barrel. The Hoosiers of the 45th Illinois were pinned down in a crater that June 25, 1862, the result of a Union mine used in an attempt to blow up a section of the Rebel works at Vicksburg. The Federal attack had faltered in the reeking pit, and the Confederates had taken the opportunity to hurl ad hoc hand grenades, modified artillery shells, down up the helpless Yankees. A Union officer reported that “the enemy... with their hand-grenades render it difficult for our working parties to remain in the crater at all. The wounds inflicted by those missiles are frightful.”

While artillery shells were pressed into service during that incident, there were several varieties of Civil War grenades made specifically for their purpose. Some had an almost cartoonish appearance, with fins for aerodynamics and plungers for detonating. Others looked like deadly bocce balls. But though the grenades used by the Blue and the Gray were far from perfect—some were as dangerous to the thrower as they were to the intended target—a variety of improvised and purpose-built grenades were hurled and used in combat in numerous battles.

Grenades had been used in battle for hundreds of years before the Civil War, and were well known to the military men of the 1860s. In his 1861 *Military Dictionary*, Colonel Henry Lee Scott described a grenade as “small shell about 2-inches in diameter, which, being set on fire by means of a short fuze and cast among the enemy’s troops causes great damage by its explosion.” For troops attacking fortifications, Scott recommended the use of “blindages,” a French term for armored shields, as protection from grenades.

Hand grenades were frequently used during the summer of 1863 at the twin sieges of Port Hudson and Vicksburg. Following the 1862 capture of New Orleans, Rebels fortified Port Hudson, situated atop an 80-foot bluff on a bend in the Mississippi River and surrounded by deep ravines, in a desperate attempt to keep the river open between northern Louisiana and Vicksburg as an avenue to the trans-Mississippi Confederacy. In May 1863, Maj. Gen. General Nathaniel Banks' army of more than 30,000 men moved north from New Orleans to attack Port Hudson, which, although well fortified, was garrisoned by only around 6,800 Confederates under Maj. Gen. Franklin Gardner. Banks' goal was to overrun Port Hudson and proceed up the river to join forces with Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's force besieging Vicksburg. On May 27, Banks launched an all-out assault on the miles of earthworks surrounding Port Hudson. It failed miserably.

This article by Joseph G. Bilby was originally published in the November 2007 issue of America's Civil War magazine. For more great articles be sure to subscribe to America's Civil War magazine today!

4. After Action Report

SJVCWRT Meeting of 2/14/19

By Ron Vaughan

It is not too surprising that our Valentine's Day meeting was attended by only 10 of us. The meeting was called to order by President Michael Spencer at 7:00. Treasurer Gail S. reported our bank balance is \$5,577. Our check sent to Raymond has not been cashed yet. Richard Hatcher, one of our conference speakers sent a request to be paid \$70 for his breakfasts. Mike Green moved that we should pay this, as he had come all this way to speak to us. The motion was approved.

Mike reported that Parker Hill will be purchasing plaques for Raymond Battlefield. Each will cost about \$450 to 500, including installation.

MIKE GREEN REPORTED THAT HE RECEIVED A NICE 20 YEAR PIN FROM THE CIVIL WAR TRUST! We all congratulated him.

Gail stated that if we had finger foods only, our Christmas Party could be at her house.

Our Program theme was 'LOVE IN THE CIVIL WAR'.

Ron V. showed a slideshow with text of several couples who demonstrated love and sacrifice during the war:

*Keith and Linda Blalock were Unionists in North Carolina, and wound up living a life on the run in the Appalachian Mountains for the duration of the war.

*The story of Sullivan and Sarah Ballou is well known, because of the beautiful love letter he wrote, prior to his death at Bull Run.

*The gallant General George Pickett married Sally Minge in 1851. He wrote many letters to Sallie during the war, but the most moving was his letter just after "Pickett's Charge". On his deathbed after the war, he refused painkillers, and wanted only Sallie to be present for his last hours. Sallie lived for 44 years after, and she wrote many books and gave lectures about her husband's story.

*General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson married Mary Anna Morrison in 1857. After Jackson died from wounds, his wife never remarried, and she became known as “The Widow of the Confederacy.”

*John Pelham was only 22 when the war broke out. He was a dashing artillery officer, and married Bessie Shackelford in March 1863. He left her side to participate in leading a charge at Kelly’s Ford, where he was badly wounded and he died in Bessie’s arms.

*General John Reynolds fell in love with Mary “Kate” Hewitt at West Point, but his family would not accept that she was a Catholic, so he had to keep the relationship a secret. When he was killed at Gettysburg, his ring with her name on it was sent home to his family, so only then did they learn of the secret romance. Kat joined a convent, since she could never marry anyone else.

*General Francis Barlow married Arabella in 1861. When he was wounded at Gettysburg, Confederate General John B. Gordon allowed Arabella to come through the lines and care for her husband. She was also permitted to take him home and nurse him back to health. When Francis rejoined the army, she continued to serve as a nurse, until she died of heat stroke. Francis never remarried.

*“The Case of the Miraculous Pregnancy:” Dr. LeGrand Capers of Vicksburg recalled a very extraordinary case during the fighting around Vicksburg. A Minie ball wounded a soldier, passing through his testicals, and then lodging itself in a woman’s reproductive organs. After treating her wound, Dr. Capers later discovered that she was pregnant! The soldier and woman were reunited, thanks to Dr. Capers, and later married and raised the child. This miraculous “Minie Ball Pregnancy” was widely celebrated in Southern Newspapers.

Our next presenter was Wayne Scott/Abe Lincoln. He spoke about the origin of Valentine's Day, beginning with St. Valentine, who was imprisoned by Roman Emperor Claudius. Valentine slipped love messages out of his cell, to a young lady. Thus began the tradition of Valentine cards.

Next, our most interesting topic, Kay Scott/Mary Lincoln, spoke about the early life of Mary Todd. Mary was born into a wealthy family. She was sent to an academy for girls, to learn society skills. She eventually moved to Springfield to live with her sister Elizabeth.

She enjoyed the society life in Springfield. One of her "swans" was Stephen Douglas. Mary met Abe at a cotillion, and during their first dance he stepped on her feet. But she liked him because he also liked to discuss books and poetry. They became engaged, but Mary's father rejected the idea. However, Mary said she loved Abe, and father gave his consent to the marriage.

At the end of Kay's talk, Wayne gave Kay a fancy box, a Valentines present, that contained a very sparkly ring!

The meeting ended at 8:30 with the usual book raffle.

5. CIVIL WAR HUMOR

From "The Blue & Gray Laughing"

"One day a wealthy old lady, whose plantation was in the vicinity of the camp, came in and inquired for General (O.H.) Payne. When the commander made his appearance, the old lady in warm language told him that his men had stolen her last coop of chickens, and demanded restoration or its value in money.

'I am sorry for you, Madam,' replied the General, 'but I can't help it. The fact is, Madam, we are determined to squelch out the rebellion , if it cost every damned chicken in Tennessee.'

6. PRESERVATION NEWS

The American Battlefield Trust Celebrates!

Together, we have saved more than 50,000 acres of battlefield land in 24 states, including historic properties at Antietam, Bentonville, Chancellorsville, Chattanooga, Gettysburg, Manassas, Princeton, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Wilson's Creek, the Wilderness and more. Celebrate our recent victories.