

The Signal Flag

Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table

Campaign #20

Skirmish #3

November 2006

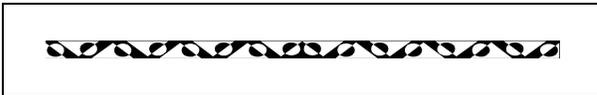
From the Rear Ranks:

President's Report: Summary of Campaign #19

Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table – 2005/06

- **Seven of nine speakers were members.**
- **Ed Bearss was our guest speaker in March.**
- **James McPherson was our banquet speaker in May on the topic of "Antietam."**
- **\$2,000.00 was donated to the Civil War Preservation Trust for the Slaughter Pen Farm.**
- **\$300.00 worth of books was donated to the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College.**
- **Our Treasury is in the black AGAIN!**
- **Dues remained the same for the past five years.**
- **We have 100 dues paying members.**
- **Four groups participated in the Round Table discussions in December of 2005.**
- **Ten members participated in the "Show and Tell" night in March of 2006.**
- **Fifteen members make up the Executive Board.**
- **We are incorporated; thank you to Dave Walter and Vince Carosella.**
- **Our annual field trip was to Sharpsburg in May.**
- **We are on record in OPPOSITION to Gambling at Gettysburg!**
- **Our newsletter, "The Signal Flag," continues to be one of the best in our area, again!**
- **Book donations continue to increase**

I remain your most obedient servant,



What is the BVCWRT all about?

~Offices~

- President:** Robert Sprague
- Vice President:** John Walls
- Secretary:** Lynne Fulton
- Treasurer:** Dave Walter

We were founded in 1987. According to our by laws. "the purpose of the Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table shall be to provide a congenial medium through which persons having a common interest in the events of the American Civil War – its causes

and

~ Committee Members ~

- Preservations:** John Walls / Mike Liddy
Mark Campi
- Nominating:** John Whiteside / Vince Carosella
- Speaker:** Roger Arthur / Joe Lehman
- Monthly Scribe/ Trips:** Susan Mahoney
- Credentials:** Bill Sitman
- Greeter:** Loretta Thomas
- Publicity:** Harriett Mueller
- Historians:** Bill Sitman / Mike Liddy

effects, engagements, personages, units, armaments

and other things pertaining thereto – may satisfy the interest and broaden individual knowledge through discussion, lectures, field trips and the exchange of books, paper and other data. The purpose is also to consider the preservation and protection of the battlefields, sites, landmarks, relics and collections of the period."

~ Members at Large ~

David Hoffritz / James Lawler

American Civil War. This interest can range from the

casual to the obsessive. We intend to tailor our Activities and presentations to appeal to all of our members, novice or expert.

~ Annual Membership ~

Family \$35.00 Individual \$20.00
Students \$10

Welcome New Members & Reenlistments

??? *Quesions* ???

Contact ~ Robert Sprague

Phone (610)644-0353

e-mail ROBERTS@comcast.net

23 Wistar Rd

Pacoli, PA 19301

Webmaster ~ James Lawler

e-mail dtownjim@comcast.net

BVCWRT Web Site:

<http://bvcwrt.home.comcast.net>

Signal Flag Editor ~ Lynne Fulton

Phone (610)647-1039

e-mail FULTONL1949@AOL.net

The Round Table *welcomes our new members since our last meeting. Please welcome them and share your Civil War enthusiasm. Our new members this month.*

Patrick Gubicza



Unsolicited articles from our members are welcome. Please contact me!



Editor's Note



“Have you seen those gorgeous leaves “

Well, it feels like winter is coming now and I am not sure I am ready for the cold weather and the snow. We now have all our months scheduled with activities. I must again apology for this rocky start with the newsletter. We have not successfully place one online as yet but hopefully this issue will be located out on the web this month. October and September's newsletter we had some problems so they need to be edited and then they will be out on the web as well. I appreciate your patience through this learning process.

Dues: *Please make sure you fill out the membership form so we have all your current information on record. Make out your membership checks to **BVCWRT** and give to Dave Walter, our Treasurer at the next meeting.*

Meeting Minutes: *submitted by Lynne Fulton. Thanks go out to John Whiteside and Vince Carosella for standing in for Bob Sprague and John Wall.*

Website: *Please make sure that you begin checking the website at the end of the fourth week of each month for the publication of the Signal Flag online. If you have problems with downloading the newsletter, please let us know and we will see if we can help.*

Book Review: *Civil War Generals buried in Pennsylvania by David L Calihan, Submitted by Lynne Fulton*

Articles: *“Death of Margie Bears” (Washington Post), “General Sickles visits his troops”, and “Meaning of a Flag Draped Coffin” (Templewebsite).*

Banquets: *Our banquet this year will be on May 8th, West Chester Elks, speaker will Be Gabor Boritt, who will talk about the Lincoln speech no one knew about.*

Lynne Fulton , Editor

Brandywine Valley Civil War

Round Table



Come to our next meeting

1 November 2006

Speaker: Michael Werner

Topic : “Jewish Contribution to the War”

Time : 7:00PM

Place : West Chester Borough Hall, Gay Street

This month's speaker will be Chief Warrant Officer, Michael Werner. Mike sent me a very impressive resume, unfortunately I cannot list all of his activities because there are pages so I will try and highlight some of his major career events. He is a military historian and is currently serving in the 157th unit Combat Service Support Brigade out of Willow Grove. He has earned three master degrees two in military studies, with honors, and one in education. He was a former New York City social studies teacher. He has lectured at numerous Civil War Roundtables, colleges, other organizations and was selected to speak at the 2006 Conference of Army historians, however it has been postponed.

His military side; he is a Chief Warrant Officer 3 and is a veteran of the current conflict. He has been called to active duty twice since 9-11-01: the first time was with the 311th Military History Detachment, Fort Totten, NY, where he co-authored an army publication entitled “the Role of the Army Reserve in the 11 September Attacks: New York City”. Prior to this active duty tour, he was awarded the 5X MOS-Historian award. The second time he was called to active duty he was sent to Uzbekistan where I ran the supply warehouse and motivated young soldier to take distant learning courses for college credit.

I think we are in for a real treat when Mike comes to talk with us in November. The topic, I believe, will be very interesting and something new for our roundtable.

Meeting Minutes - From October 4, 2006

Submitted by Lynne Fulton

The President's Report/Announcements: John Whiteside did a wonderful job standing in for Bob while he is recuperating from surgery. Bob will be back with us next month. John read a letter we received from David Duncan the Director of Membership and Development at the Civil War Trust. He thanked us for our \$1000. contribution to the Slaughter Pen Farm. The Trip to West Point was a success; those who were able to make the trip said that they really enjoyed it and that they learned so much and were excited at what they were able to see. Thanks were extended to Dennis and Susan Mahoney for their connections at the Point which contributed to such a successful tour.

The Treasurer's Report: Dave Walter reported the following: The General Fund as of 9/31 was \$1,892.59. We took in \$57.00 in the book raffle. We received \$20. in additional contributions. We sent out \$1000. to Civil War Trust for the Slaughter's Pen Farm. We are starting out pretty good this year.

Book Raffle: Vince Carosella did a great job with the book raffle standing in for John Walls while John was on vacation.

Website: Jim Lawler, our webmaster, continues to do a wonderful job at maintaining our webpage. We are continuing to strive to have our Signal Flag out online for members to download.

Special Events: Loretta Thomas gave us information on the Civil War Symposium which is being held at the Union League in Philadelphia on Saturday, November 11, 2006. The cost will be \$75. and the time is 8:00AM – 3:00PM. Some of the speakers who will be there are; Allen Guelzo, Jeffery Wert, Andy Waskie, Kent Materson Brown and James Mundy. The topic: *The Common Soldier Billy Yank and Johnny Reb.*

Speaker: Michael Kaufman – Author of “American Brutus” John Wilkes Booth.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION FOR DECEMBER'S MEETING

Group A – Dave Walters, Moderator

Question: “Fighting Regiments of the Civil War.” Discuss which regiment on each side should claim to be the “best and toughest fighters,” and why?

Group B – Mark Campi, Moderator

Question: In your opinion, did the Union win the Civil War in the Eastern Theatre OR the Western Theatre? Consider where the most significant victories of the war occurred and make a case for your answer.

Group C – Vince Carosella, Moderator

Question: If the South were successful in obtaining recognition from England, what effect, if any, would that have had on the outcome of the Civil War? Would England have sent troops? Explain.

Group D – Roger Arthur, Moderator

Question: One of the most controversial Union generals during the Civil War was General George B. McClellan. Was his poor reputation as a general justified? Explain.

Sad News in the History Community

Washington Post Obituary

Many of you know Edwin Bearss, he was our preservation speaker last year. It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that his wife Margie has passed away. This is the obituary from the Washington Post on Wednesday, October 11, 2006.

BEARSS - MARGIE RIDDLE BEARSS

Brandon, MS and Arlington, VA, MARGIE RIDDLE BEARSS, 80, died Saturday, October 7, 2006 at St. Dominic Hospital, Jackson, MS following a lengthy illness. Burial will be private. Baldwin-Lee Funeral Home, Pearl, MS is handling arrangements. The daughter of Ralph Caswell Riddle and Mattie Reid Riddle, she was born October 22, 1925 and grew up in Brandon. She was a fourth-generation member of Bethel Baptist Church. After graduating from Hinds Junior College and Blue Mountain College, she taught English in Goodman and Lexington. In 1958, she married Edwin Bearss, Historian of the Vicksburg Military Park. In 1966, they moved to Arlington, VA.

She had a lifelong love of books, poetry and Civil War history. She helped recover, preserve and catalog artifacts from the Union Ironclad Cairo. She designed and constructed the exhibits at the Grand Gulf Military Park. Her books include Sherman's Forgotten Campaign (1987) and, with her dear friend, Rebecca Drake, two collections of Champion Hill documents, My Dear Wife (2005) and Darwina's Diary (2006). While living in Arlington, she was elected to membership in the National Military Collectors and Historians and named Fellow for her work pertaining to the USS Cairo and Grand Gulf Park.

Survivors include husband, Edwin Bearss of Arlington, VA; daughter, Sara Bearss of Richmond, VA; sons, Edwin Bearss, Jr. and his wife, Annika Bearss, son, Michael Bearss, all of Columbus, GA; daughter, Jenny Bearss and sons Todd and Andy Olmsted, all of Brandon, MS.

Memorials may be sent to The Civil War Preservation Trust: For: Slaughter Farm, Fredericksburg, VA

General Sickles visits his troops

This Day in Civil War History: October 18, 1863

Union General Daniel Sickles returns to visit his old command, the Third Corps of the Army of the Potomac. He was recovering from the loss of his leg at Gettysburg, and the visit turned sour when the army's commander, General George Meade, informed Sickles that he would not be allowed to resume command until he completely recovered from his injury. Sickles had a somewhat checkered past. As a Congressman in 1859, he killed his wife's lover across from the White House in Washington, D.C., but was acquitted when his lawyers employed a temporary insanity defense. He used his political leverage to secure a commission as a brigadier general when the war began, and his personal skills endeared him to his men. He rose quickly, and by early 1863 he was commander of the Third Corps.

At Gettysburg, Meade posted Sickles' troops at the left end of the Union line. The Army of the Potomac was arranged in a three-mile long, fishhook-shaped line on the top of Cemetery Ridge and Culp's Hill. On the morning of July 2, Sickles noticed that just in front of his position was a section of high ground. In his estimation, this rise could be used by the Confederates to shell the Union position. Sickles expressed confusion over his orders and three times Meade explained that Sickles was to hold the end of Cemetery Ridge. Sickles was unhappy with the explanation, failing to understand that Meade was fighting a defensive battle. He moved his corps forward anyway, and the move nearly cost the Union the battle. A furious Meade ordered Sickles to withdraw his troops, but the Confederates were already attacking. After heavy losses, the Third Corps moved back to Cemetery Ridge.

Despite his wound, Sickles hurried back to Washington to conduct damage control. One of his first visitors was President Lincoln. Sickles was one of the few Democrats who welcomed Lincoln to Washington in 1861, and Lincoln remembered that gesture. Sickles gave his account of the battle and justified his move. He even claimed that his action prevented Meade from retreating and therefore prevented a Union defeat. This began a war of words between Meade and Sickles that lasted the rest of their lives. When the reports on the battle were filed that fall, Sickles did not fare well. Many, such as General Gouverneur K. Warren and General-in-Chief Henry Halleck, blasted Sickles for his actions.

The hatred that Sickles developed for Meade after the Gettysburg incident peaked on October 18, when Meade made it clear that he had no intention of restoring Sickles to command. Sickles later testified in front of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War against Meade, but his own combat career was effectively over. He spent the next half-century defending his record, attacking Meade, and trying to shape the history of Gettysburg by continuing to promote his account of the battle before he died in 1914.

From Temple website.

Meaning of a Flag Draped Coffin

September 29, 2006

From Temple website

To understand what the flag draped coffin really means..... Here is how to understand the flag that laid upon it and is surrendered to so many widows and widowers. Do you know that at military funerals, the 21-gun salute stands for the sum of the numbers in the year 1776?

Have you ever noticed the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the United States of America Flag 13 times? You probably thought it was to symbolize the original 13 colonies, but we learn something new every day!

- The 1st fold of the flag is a symbol of life.
- The 2nd fold is a symbol of the belief in eternal life.
- The 3rd fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing the ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of the country to attain peace throughout the world.
- The 4th fold represents the weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.
- The 5th fold is a tribute to the country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."
- The 6th fold is for where people's hearts lie. It is with their heart that they pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.
- The 7th fold is a tribute to its Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that they protect their country and their flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of their republic.
- The 8th fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.
- The 9th fold is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

- The 10th fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of their country since they were first born.
- The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.
- The 13th fold, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding them of their nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for them the rights, privileges and freedoms they enjoy today. There are some traditions and ways of doing things that have deep meaning. In the future, you'll see flags folded and now you will know why. Share this with the children you love and all others who love what is referred to, the symbol of "Liberty and Freedom."

MAYBE THE SUPREME COURT SHOULD READ THIS EXPLANATION BEFORE THEY RENDER THEIR DECISION ON THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. IN THE MEANTIME, MAY GOD PROTECT US ALWAYS. ONE NATION, UNDER GOD, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.-

CIVIL WAR GENERALS BURIED IN PENNSYLVANIA

Tuesday October 3, 2006

from Temple website

Bulletin of the Association for Gravestone Studies - Vol. 30, No1, Winter & Spring 2006

“THEY DID THEIR WORK BRAVELY: CIVIL WAR GENERALS BURIED IN PENNSYLVANIA”

By David L. Callihan. Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 2004. 123 pages, black and white photographs, bibliography, index. Softbound, \$22. ISBN 0-7884-2501-3

Many of you may be familiar with Grave Matters, a newsletter about Civil War gravesites. This book comes from the pen of the same author. Forty-four full rank Union generals and one Confederate general are buried in Pennsylvania, with George G. Meade, Winfield S. Hancock, and John F. Reynolds perhaps being the best known. Listings are arranged by the city or town where they are buried. Though this may sound awkward, it is actually advantageous for the researcher who wants to visit the burial sites. A biographical sketch and one or more photo images of the subject and his grave marker appear with each entry and a map and directions for locating each gravesite can save busy researchers hours of time. Because most of the subjects were not buried in military cemeteries and have privately placed grave markers, the photo images offer some variety. Since no similar book exists for generals buried in Pennsylvania, this book fills a previously empty niche.



Scheduled Speakers for 2006 - 2007

- Sep 6, 2006: Sid Copel - "Civil War Humor"**
Oct 4, 2006: Michael Kaufman - "American Brutus"
Nov 1, 2006: Michael Werner - "Jewish Contribution to the War"
- Dec 6, 2006: Group Discussions of Selected Topics and Christmas Social**
Jan 3, 2007: Dave Kohler - "The Crater"
Feb 7, 2007: Prof. James Hedtke - "Eli Parker, Grant's Secretary"
Mar 7, 2007: Dennis Kelly - "The Fort Pillow Controversy"
Apr 4, 2007: BVCWRT Members - "Show and Tell"
May 2, 2007: Roger Arthur - "The 97th PVI"
May 8, 2007: Annual Banquet at Elks in West Chester speaker Gabor Boritt
Topic: "The Gettysburg Gospel" The Lincoln Speech that Nobody knows.