



The Signal Flag



BRANDYWINE VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Campaign # 27

Skirmish # 3

November 2012

From the Rear Ranks:

Greetings Members! It was great to see you all in October and once again I was happy to see some new faces. Unfortunately I am going to miss the November meeting, due to a family vacation. However you are in the safe hands of our Secretary Ted Pawlik who will run the meeting in my absence. In addition I am sorry to miss our presentation this month done by Mike Plunkett who will present Irish music from the Civil War in what he calls "Paddy has gone for Soldier." I have included an important 150th milestone below which discusses the removal (finally in the thoughts of many contemporaries) of George McClellan from his command of the Army of the Potomac. He was told to return home to New Jersey for orders (lucky for us) that never came. But his replacement, Ambrose Burnside would have deep flaws as well which would be evident in the next great battle in the East at Fredericksburg. Enjoy November's meeting and I hope to see you all in December!

Respectively,
Chip Crowe
President,
Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table

Note: The following article appeared in the New York Times on November 10, 1862.

The Removal of Gen. McClellan.

November 10, 1862

Gen. McCLELLAN has been removed from the command of the Army of the Potomac and Gen. BURNSIDE appointed in his place. The immediate cause of this removal has been Gen. McCLELLAN's refusal to advance against the enemy, even under the most peremptory orders of the General-in-Chief. It will be seen, by a letter from Gen. HALLECK to the Secretary of War, which we publish in another column, that on the 1st of October Gen. MCCLELLAN was urged by Gen. HALLECK to cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy, -- being at the same time reminded of the disadvantages of delaying until the Potomac should be swollen, and the roads impaired, by the autumnal rains. Finding that this produced no effect, Gen. MCCLELLAN was "peremptorily ordered" by Gen. HALLECK, on the 6th of October, to "cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy or drive him South." For three weeks this order was not obeyed, and the only excuse given for not obeying it, so far as appears, -- the want of supplies, -- is shown by the letter of Gen. HALLECK to have been utterly without foundation. The disclosures of that letter, concerning Gen. MCCLELLAN's constant and reiterated complaints of lack of supplies, are very remarkable and deserve special attention.

We presume that this particular instance of disobedience of orders, though the immediate occasion, is not the whole cause of Gen. MCCLELLAN's removal. It is pretty generally understood that this is only the culmination of a systematic disregard of orders, of a steady and obstinate tardiness in the conduct of the campaign against the rebels, and of a consequent inefficiency in command, which would long ago have secured his dismissal under any Administration less timid than that which has now possession of power. The fifteen months during which he has had virtual control of the war have been utterly barren of results to the cause he has professed to serve. Few commanders in history have had such splendid opportunities, and fewer still have so ostentatiously thrown them away. With an army capable of the most heroic achievements, powerful in

numbers, unrivaled in discipline and equipment, eager always for active and onward movement, he has accomplished absolutely nothing but successful retreats from inferior forces, and the defence of the Capital at Washington, which he should have left no foe capable of menacing. The rebel armies have grown up in his presence, and by his toleration. Through all his long career he has made but one attack and won but a single victory: and that became absolutely fruitless through his failure to follow it up.

We have no theory on which to explain this most extraordinary failure of Gen. MCCLELLAN as a commander, or the still more extraordinary persistence of the President in committing the fortunes of the war to his hands. Gen. MCCLELLAN has shown too many of the qualities of an accomplished soldier to attribute his failure to simple incapacity. That he is absolutely disloyal to the Government we have never permitted ourselves to believe. Yet we think it quite probable that his heart has never been in the war, -- that through it all he has had hopes of a compromise which should end it, and that he has feared the effect upon such a compromise of a stern and relentless prosecution of hostilities. His position and possibly his feelings have been those ascribed by MACAULAY to ESSEX, who commanded the armies of the Parliament at the outbreak of the great civil war. He was an accomplished soldier and a Parliamentarian; but he shrank from civil war, -- he hoped through it all for an accommodation with the King, and "next to a great defeat he dreaded a great victory." Under such a leader the war could never prosper, and it was soon found necessary to replace him by HAMPDEN, who carried into the field the boldness and courage he had shown in politics, and who had the sagacity to see from the outset that "in war of all kinds, moderation is imbecility." As a politician, Gen. MCCLELLAN's sympathies, previous to the rebellion, had always been with the South. He has believed them wronged by Northern sentiment and by Northern action. And beyond all question, he has hoped and believed that a time would come when the war could be arrested, and when the Southern leaders, backed by a powerful party in the Northern States, would listen to terms of accommodation, -- and that nothing would stand in the way of such a compromise more than a victory which should wound their pride by humiliating their arms and crushing their power.

In this view of the case, Gen. MCCLELLAN has been encouraged by the political partisans who, at an early stage in the war, made him their prospective candidate for the Presidency, and came thus to have an interest in putting him in opposition to the Administration which he professed to serve. They defended his errors, and made themselves the special champions of his worst mistakes. They had unquestionable provocation and some excuse for much of this in the intemperate zeal with which he was assailed; but they betrayed him into an undue reliance on the support of a party, and a ruinous subserviency to their wishes and views. We know not how else to account for the steady and systematic disregard he has shown of the wishes and orders of the Government, and for his adherence to a deliberate and methodical inactivity, which has brought the cause of the Union to the very verge of ruin. Unless we have been misinformed, President LINCOLN has on two occasions written to Gen. MCCLELLAN, reviewing in detail his military operations, and demonstrating his failures to respond to the wishes and just expectations of the Government. One of these papers was prepared just after MCCLELLAN had landed on the Peninsula, at other after the battle of Antietam; and we have heard both spoken of as masterpieces of military criticism. It is a melancholy satisfaction to learn that the President of the United States, who is the Commander-in-Chief of all its armies, and who is responsible, before God and the country, for the behavior of all its Generals, did not keep Gen. MCCLELLAN in command of the Army of the Potomac from any confidence in his capacity or his fitness for the place. Why he did retain him so long after he had satisfied himself that he ought to be removed, it might be curious, though it would be useless to speculate. We trust that the first act of Congress, when it meets next month, will be to call for all the correspondence, and all the documents of every kind, which can throw light upon the extraordinary campaigns of this unfortunate commander.

Gen. BURNSIDE has been three times offered the command of the Army of the Potomac. He declined it twice, partly from a strong feeling of personal affection for Gen. MCCLELLAN, and partly from thorough confidence in his military capacity, and his devotion to the Union cause. This confidence, we suspect, was somewhat shaken during and after the battle of Antietam; while the treatment he has since received for having remonstrated against the General's causeless suspension of the fight, has probably released him from the personal obligations on which he was previously inclined to lay such controlling stress. We presume, therefore, that he will now accept the command. He has shown thus far during the war great military ability, and a thorough, unqualified, unquestioning devotion to the cause he serves. What he will be able to accomplish remains to be seen. It is now certain that, in consequence of the extraordinary delay in the movements of our army, the rebels have completely eluded them, and are now beyond their reach. The autumnal rains have commenced; the rivers and small streams of Virginia are no longer fordable; the roads are becoming muddy

and impracticable; and all rapid and effective movement is nearly impossible. If it was any part of Gen. MCCLELLAN's purpose to prevent a decisive battle with the rebel army, he was probably left in command just long enough to accomplish his object.

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? Questions ? Contact:

Richard (Chip) Crowe
President, Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
15 Rose Tree Drive
Downingtown, PA 10335
E-Mail: rcowejr1@yahoo.com

BVCWRT Web Site:

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

BVCWRT Blog:

<http://bvcwrt.blogspot.com/>

BVCWRT Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/BrandywineValleyCivilWarRoundTable>

Webmaster: Jim Lawler
dtownjim@comcast.net

***We are wheelchair assessable**

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

Signal Flag November 2012

What is the BVCWRT all about???

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 effects, engagements, personages, units, armaments and other things pertaining thereto - may satisfy their interest and broaden individual knowledge through discussion, lectures, field trips and the exchange of books, paper and other data. The purposed is also to consider the preservation and protection of the battlefields, sites, landmarks, relics and collection of the period."

In plain English, we are an organization of diverse people brought together by our common interest in the 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 our members, novice or expert.

Welcome New Members & Reenlistments

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

New Members: Welcome





Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
Come to our next meeting
November 7, 2012

Speaker: Mike Plunkett
Topic: "Paddy has Gone for a Soldier"
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: West Chester Borough Hall, Gay Street

Our Speaker this month is Mike Plunkett. This is Mike's first presentation to our roundtable. His musical presentation is called "**Paddy has Gone for a Soldier.**"



Mike is a Civil War Period musician. For many years he has performed with The Libby Prison Minstrels at reenactments, concerts and other events, including performances at the National Museum of the Civil War in Harrisburg, Gettysburg National Park Visitor Center, Welcome America Fourth of July Celebration and the Lincoln 200 Events, on Independence Mall.

Mike received his Bachelor's degree in Music Education (Choral Music and Classical Guitar), from Glassboro State College (Now Rowan University). He has taught elementary music in Deptford Township Schools for 34 years. I have received the 'Governor's Award for Teacher Excellence' on three occasions.

In addition Mike is the Director of Music at St Patrick's Church, now Holy Angles Parish in Woodbury, a position he has held for over 33 years. He has conducted the choir of St Patrick's in two Masses at the Vatican and in Masses and concerts in major cathedrals in Rome, Florence and Sienna. For 10 years he was the conductor of the Chorus and Orchestra of the Diocese of Camden, where he conducted performances including Handel's Messiah, the Bach Magnificent, Hayden's Te Deum, Mozart's Regina Caeli and Vivaldi's Gloria. Mike directed and arranged the music for the CD produced by the Diocesan Choir and Orchestra, 'Immaculate Mary'.

Mike has developed a one man show called PADDY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER. In this show he portrays an Irish American Union soldier. Through stories and songs he will bring to life the experience of an uprooted immigrant who becomes an American patriot.

This is a special note of thanks to member Jim Christ who contributed these articles that fit the theme of this month's presentation. Thanks for your contributions Jim!

Mulligans Brigade

The Irish distinguished themselves fighting for both sides during the Civil War, though the majority probably fought for the Union Army. In Missouri the Irish presence was perhaps most in evidence during the Battle of Lexington in September 1861. Among the 3,500 Union soldiers defending the town against General Price's army of over 12,000 men was an Illinois Irish brigade known as the "Western Irish Brigade" or "Mulligan's Brigade" commanded by Colonel James Mulligan, a popular Chicago Irish politician turned soldier, who was soon placed in command of all the Union forces at Lexington. Although the Federals fought with determination, they were finally overwhelmed by superior numbers and by the fact that Price's men cleverly used watered down hemp bales found in fields and in a nearby warehouse as a kind of movable breastworks. Moving ever closer to the Federals, they were able to make one final rush and force Mulligan's troops to surrender. During the Civil War numerous songs appeared about the Irishman's well-documented courage under fire, such as "Meagher is Leading the Irish Brigade," and "Corcoran's Irish Legion." Even the Confederacy had songs about Irish-Americans, such as "Kelly's Irish Brigade," a reworking of a northern broadside with substituted Confederate references. Only a few of these songs have survived the passage of the years; "Honest Pat Murphy" is one that is still sung. Originally entitled "Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade," the piece seems to have lost its specific references to Gen. Thomas Meagher of New York and is now about a generic Irish Union soldier in a generic Irish Union brigade. A close variant of this melody was also used for a comic Confederate song written by Charles L. Ward entitled "Think of Your Head in the Morning." We first heard the song sung by Folk-Legacy recording artist Ed Trickett of Brookville, Maryland. "Honest Pat Murphy" can be found in Irwin Silber's Songs of the Civil War, as well as on the Folkways album Songs of a New York Lumberjack, a compilation of New Yorker Ezra Barhight's traditional songs sung by folklorist Ellen Stekert.



State Historical Society of Missouri
Col. James Mulligan

Says Pat to his mother, "It looks strange to me
Brothers fighting in such a queer manner,
But I'll fight till I die if I never get killed
For America's bright starry banner."

Far away in the East came a dashing young blade,
And the song he was singing so gayly,
'Twas honest Pat Murphy of the Irish Brigade
And the song of the splintered shillelagh.

The morning soon broke, and poor Paddy awoke,
He found rebels to give satisfaction,
And the drummer was beating the Devil's tattoo,
They were calling the boys into action.

Far away in the East was a dashing young blade,
And the song he was singing so gayly,
Was honest Pat Murphy of the Irish Brigade
And the song of the splintered shillelagh.

Sure, the day after battle, the dead lay in heaps,
And Pat Murphy lay bleeding and gory,
With a hole in his head by some enemy's ball
That ended his passion for glory.

No more in the camp will his letters be read,
Or the song be heard singing so gayly,
For he died far away from the friends that he loved,
And far from the land of shillelagh.

Source : <http://www.bartonpara.com/civilwar/jw/murphy.htm>

Pat Murphy of the Irish Brigade

Pat Murphy of the Irish Brigade sung by Bobby Horton, who has waged a one man crusade to bring Civil War music to modern audiences. Immigrants, especially Irish and German, were a mainstay of the Army of the Potomac, and wherever you have Irish fighting you are going to have Irish songs about the fighting.

For the great Gaels of Ireland
Are the men that God made mad,
For all their wars are merry,
And all their songs are sad.
Says Pat to his mother, "It looks strange to me
Brothers fighting in such a queer manner,
But I'll fight till I die if I never get killed
For America's bright starry banner."
Far away in the East came a dashing young blade,
And the song he was singing so gayly,
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Source: <http://the-american-catholic.com/2012/08/11/pat-murphy-of-the-irish-brigade/>

IRISH BRIGADE HISTORY

The Irish Brigade of the American Civil War were the most honored and beloved of all soldiers. Their shout of ***faugh a ballagh, Clear the Way!*** could be heard across the fields as the bright green and gold of their flag blew in the wind. Many had fought in Ireland like Thomas Francis Meagher "Meagher of the Sword" before coming to this new country and would fight again to preserve precious freedom. He formed the first regiment to be known as the Fighting 69th and went into battle with the Finnian flag flying the motto ***Riam nar druid ó sbarin iann*** which translates from the Gaelic, ***We will never flee from the clashing of blades***. As other regiments joined the Fighting 69th they became known as the Irish Brigade. The Irish Brigade's strong religious beliefs and culture unified them and provided comfort in the bloody battles. Love of country, loyalty and fierceness in battle made them proud to be the Fighting Irish. You can find monuments of the Irish Brigade in Gettysburg, Antietam, New York and many more battlefields and cities all over the United States. As the threat of civil war loomed over the nation, Thomas Francis Meagher, joined the 69th New York State Militia. This was a ninety-day regiment that first saw action at First Bull Run and was under the command of Colonel Michael Cocoran. The colonel was captured and spent more than a year in a Confederate prison. When the ninety-day enlistment expired, Captain Meagher returned, with his regiment to New York.

Shortly after his return, Meagher began raising a unit of Irish volunteers to serve for a term of three years. This unit would eventually become the 63rd, 69th and 88th New York Voluntary Infantry Regiments. The 69th and 88th regiments were organized at Throgs Neck, New York and enlistments primarily occurred between early September through mid-November, 1861. The 63rd New York was organized at Staten Island, New York. Meagher was appointed brigadier general and took command of the Irish Brigade on February 5, 1862. During the spring of 1862 a non-Irish regiment, the 29th Massachusetts was added to strengthen the Brigade during the Peninsula Campaign.

In October, 1862, the men of the 116th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment joined the ranks of the brigade. Composed primarily of Irishmen from Philadelphia they were organized at Camp Emitt and joined the brigade at Harper's Ferry. One month later, in November, 1862, the 29th Massachusetts was traded for another Irish regiment, the 28th Massachusetts. This regiment was organized at Cambridge, Massachusetts, December 13, 1861.

The brigade was assigned to General Edwin V. Sumner's Division, Army of the Potomac. In March of 1862, the brigade became the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division, 2nd Army Corps.

Throughout its life in the Army of the Potomac, the Irish Brigade was almost always at the foremost position and suffered high casualties as a result.

Thanks to their toughness and bravery, the five-regiment Irish Brigade led the Union charge in many of the Army of the Potomac's major battles. This meant that they suffered disproportionate numbers of casualties. At the Battle of Antietam, in September 1862, about 60 percent of the soldiers in the 63rd and 69th New York regiments, almost 600 men in all,

were killed in battle. A few months later, at the Battle of Fredericksburg, 545 of the brigade's 1,200 men were killed or wounded. "Irish blood and Irish bones cover that terrible field today," wrote one soldier. "We are slaughtered like sheep."

In July 1863, at the Battle of Gettysburg, about 320 of the Irish Brigade's remaining 530 soldiers were killed. (There is a monument to the Irish Brigade on the battlefield there: a green malachite Celtic cross with a trefoil, an Irish harp and the numbers of the three New York Irish regiments rendered in bronze on its front. At the cross's feet lies a statue of an Irish wolfhound, a symbol of steadfastness and honor.)

Efforts were made after the Chancellorsville battle to disband the brigade. General Meagher protested this action and resigned his commission on May 14, 1863. Though his resignation was later cancelled, he never again served in the field with the Irish Brigade.

Though the brigade continued to distinguish itself on the battlefields, increasing casualties forced changes within the brigade. By June, 1864, the brigade had been reduced to that of nearly regimental size. The brigade was officially disbanded in June, 1864, with the 116th Pennsylvania being made part of the 2nd Corps, 1st Division, 4th Brigade, in July. The three New York regiments now comprised the 3rd Brigade. Later in the year, the Second Irish Brigade was created, comprising of the 63rd, 69th, 88th New York, the 28th Massachusetts and the 7th New York Heavy Artillery. The 7th New York was then replaced by the 4th New York Heavy Artillery in the early part of 1865. During its almost four years of service, the Irish Brigade lost more than 4,000 officers and men, more than which served within the brigade at any one time. Though Richard Byrnes, Richard Duryes, Patrick Kelly, Robert Nugent and Thomas Smyth held temporary commands at various times through the brigades existence, Thomas Francis Meagher served as the brigade's only commanding general.

Source : http://irishvolunteers.tripod.com/irish_brigade_history.htm



2012-2013 Scheduled Speakers

- **Sep 5, 2012:** Sid Copel - "Notable Civil War Personalities"
- **Oct 3, 2012:** Roger Arthur - "1862"
- **Nov 7, 2012:** Mike Plunkett - Musical Presentation: "Paddy Has Gone For A Soldier"
- **Dec 5, 2012:** Dave Walter and Don Ernsberger - "Meade's Breakthrough with the PA Reserves at Fredericksburg"
- **Jan 2, 2013:** Traditional Round Table Discussion
- **Feb 6, 2013:** Christopher Densmore - "Emancipation and the Pennsylvania Quakers"
- **Mar 6, 2013:** Charlie Zahm - "Civil War Music"
- **Apr 3, 2013:** John Michael Priest - "Into the Fight: Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg"
- **May 1, 2013:** Melissa Yiaski Rabinsky - "Mary Todd Lincoln : Before, During and After Mr. Lincoln"
- **May 14, 2013:** (Annual Banquet): Robert L. Hodge - "Confederates in the Attic"

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**Brandywine Valley Civil War Round Table
Membership Application**

Application Type: New _____ Renewal _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

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Bring the completed form and a check payable to BVCWRT to a meeting or mail it to:
Dave Walter, Treasurer, 937 Thorne Drive, West Chester, PA 19382

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