

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LV, Number 3

Chicago, Illinois

November 1994

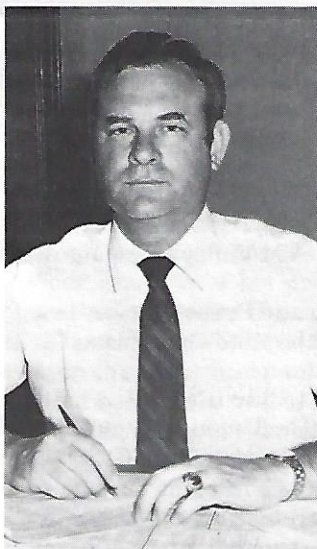
Terry Van Meter on "The Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac"

by Barbara Hughett

THE CAVALRY CORPS of the Army of the Potomac developed over the course of the Civil War from a small, under-utilized scouting force to a major combat arm with a significant role in Union victories. The Army of the Potomac's Cavalry Corps was used very poorly until the Spring of 1863, when General Joseph Hooker began ordering the use of cavalry as a body. General George Stoneman launched the first full-scale cavalry raid on Richmond during the Chancellorsville Campaign in April-May 1863.

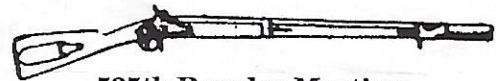
On June 9, Stoneman's successor, General Alfred Pleasanton, sent 10,000 Union troops to attack an equal number of Confederates at Brandy Station. It was the first true cavalry battle of the war, foreshadowing the growing importance that cavalry would assume in the main Union army of the East as it pursued victories.

In September 1989, the U.S. Cavalry Museum in Fort Riley, Kansas, received as a donation a flag of "The Society of the Cavalry Corps of the Armies of the United States." In researching the flag, it was discovered that the Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac, was one of the largest elements within the Society. Chief of the Museum Division, DPTMS, at Fort Riley, Terry Van Meter will address The Round Table on November 11—coincidentally Veterans Day—on "The Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac." He will present a history of the Corps from February 1863 through August 1864. At that time, General Philip Sheridan left the Army of the Potomac, taking with him the Corps' final cavalry division and the Third Cavalry Division. His presentation will illustrate how museums and their artifacts can help us in understanding the history of the American Civil War.



Terry Van Meter

Terry Van Meter, a native of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, grew up in Michigan and attended Norwich University at Northfield, Vermont, where he graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate. He is currently finishing his M.A. in Military History at Kansas



535th Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

Terry Van Meter on "The Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac"

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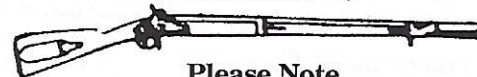
Friday, November 11

☆ ☆ ☆

Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$20.00 per person

Entree: Ragout of Lamb and Vegetables or
Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, November 9, by calling The Civil War Round Table offices at 312-341-1865. People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner. **No last-minute orders for the Catch of the Day can be honored. The chef must have at least twenty-four hours notice.**

The Union League Club is located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets. Parking is free at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club.

State University. In addition to his civilian schooling, Van Meter is a graduate of Airborne School, Infantry Officers Basic Course, Aerial Delivery School, Jungle Operations, Windale Museum Seminar, USMA-ROTC Military History Fellowship, and an Honor Graduate of Army Management Staff College.

He was retired, as a Captain in the Regular Army, due to wounds received in South Vietnam in August 1969.

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841
Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402
Phone: 312-341-1865
Fax: 312-341-1863

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The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402.

Preparatory set work has begun in Senoia, Georgia, for the movie *Andersonville—Diaries of Josiah Day*. The film is expected to run for four hours on Turner Network Television (TNT) next year.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

The Commission on Fine Arts has approved six designs for the soon-to-be-minted 1995 Civil War commemorative coins. Sales of the coins are expected to raise as much as \$21.5 million for battlefield preservation. The designs selected for the front face of each coin were submitted by noted Civil War artist Don Troiani. The reverse sides were designed by U.S. Mint sculptors and engravers.

Sale of the \$5 gold half-eagle, the silver dollar, and the copper-nickel clad half-dollar will begin in March 1995. For further information or to request an order form, write or call the Civil War Coin Program, U.S. Mint, 1001 Aerospace Road, Lanham, Maryland 20706; (301) 436-7400.

Copies of the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission's Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields are available from the American Battlefield Protection Program. The 64-page report presents the findings of the congressionally-appointed Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, which was given the two-year mission of identifying the nation's significant Civil War battlefields, evaluating their condition, and making recommendations for their preservation. To request a copy of the report, write to: National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division — IMU, PO Box 37127, LL99, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

Star Fort near Winchester, Virginia, the only Civil War fort still intact in the area, will be protected under a housing development plan approved by Frederick County. The fort will be located in a 163-house residential development. Property owners will pay an annual assessment for the fort's upkeep. Houses will be buffered so as not to be visible from the fort. The earthen fort and its four-acre grounds will be open to the public but closed to the mountain bikes, mopeds, and all-terrain vehicles that have damaged the earthworks in the past. Built in 1862 by the 4th Alabama Infantry, Star Fort was part of a system of forts, including Fort Lynette, Fort Collier, and Fort Milroy, that protected the northern entrance to Winchester.

At Kernstown, the City of Winchester and Frederick County have agreed to purchase 375 acres of the Grim Farm that played a central role during the first and second battles of Kernstown. The city and county will pay a total of \$500,000 for the land. Another thirty-three acres of the property will be developed, but the developed area will be screened from the battlefield.

In other (bad) preservation news from the Valley, the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors has approved light industrial zoning of a 193-acre portion of Tom's Brook, which was a part of Sheridan's 1864 Valley Campaign.

The South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust was recently formed to preserve the state's significant Civil War battlefields. The organization plans to mount an aggressive fund-raising campaign to buy threatened battlefields throughout the state. First on the acquisition list will be the Fort Lamar area on James Island. During the 1862 Battle of Secessionville, the Confederates at Fort Lamar helped repel an attempted Union invasion of Charleston. Later in the war Confederates constructed batteries throughout the island to ward off future Union attacks.

❧ OCTOBER MEETING ❧

by Larry Gibbs

At the 534th regular meeting on October 7, there were 150 members and guests of The Civil War Round Table on hand to honor the 1994 recipient of the distinguished Nevins-Freeman Award, Mr. Alan T. Nolan. The noted author of *The Iron Brigade* (1961) and *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (1991) gave his acceptance speech on "Grant and Sherman: An Effective Partnership."

On May 10, 1861, two important protagonists in the upcoming drama of the Civil War watched a disturbance in St. Louis. The men of General Nathaniel Lyons fired into a crowd to restore order. Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman did not know each other very well at that time, but later the results of their united efforts would help to doom the Confederacy. In his talk, Alan Nolan effectively illustrated how this friendship developed during the Civil War.

As the Civil War began, Grant and Sherman may have been disappointed with the course their careers had taken. Grant, a failure as a farmer in St. Louis, became a clerk in his father's store in Galena, Illinois. Grant had to contend with rumors of a drinking problem; Sherman had to deal with rumors of mental instability.

The Civil War saved the careers and reputations of both Grant and Sherman. After returning to the U.S. Army as officers in 1861, "the two men really came together at the Battle of Shiloh (April 1862)." After Sherman "fought like a tiger" at Shiloh, Grant cited Sherman's good judgment and skill. Fighting together in this battle helped to forge a strong bond between the two.

Nolan pointed out many differences between Grant and Sherman. According to Nolan, "Grant had a keen, direct, and unphilosophical mind and personality." Grant also developed tremendous self-confidence—a simple faith in success. In contrast, Sherman was "a complex, intellectually cultivated *bon vivant*." Sherman was more excitable and emotional than Grant and also possessed an instability and self-doubt that Grant did not have. Nolan stated that "Sherman was at his best when he had an admired superior." Nolan called this behavior a "protege-complex."

With regard to politics, Grant was a pre-Civil War Democrat-turned Republican who did not see slavery as a major issue. He was a pragmatist who stated in 1863 that "slavery is dead and cannot be resurrected." Sherman scorned the political process, and was unsympathetic toward abolition and emancipation. Further, said Nolan, Sherman was "a virulent racist who desired no black soldiers in his command."

In Nolan's view Grant had an exact understanding of military command—i.e., superiors have control. Sherman, in contrast, resisted orders to have black troops under him. Another example of his departure from military orders involved the extremely generous terms of surrender he offered Confederate General Joseph Johnston in May 1865—terms that were subsequently overturned.

In a strategic sense, both generals knew that the Confederacy would be defeated when its will to fight was destroyed. Both cooperated with the Navy and both generals met defeat with frontal attacks—Sherman at Chickasaw Bluffs and Grant at Cold Harbor. Nolan emphasized that Sherman was an innovator of a raiding strategy that deprived the South of resources. However, of the two, Grant

had a better understanding of the political issues of the war.

A singular friendship between Grant and Sherman evolved because both had a "want of ambition." The egos of Grant and Sherman allowed a strong partnership to develop. In Nolan's opinion, this friendship was instrumental in the eventual Union victory in the Civil War.

VAN METER (continued from page 1)

Positions he held in the service include Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, Battalion Staff Officer, and Company Commander. After his wounding, enroute to Cu Chi Army Hospital, his troops radioed battalion headquarters and reported him dead, because they felt certain he could not survive his injuries. Van Meter has received numerous active duty awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star with "V" device and 1st Oak Leaf Cluster, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Campaign Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation, and two Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Unit Citations.

He began his Civil Service career in 1976 at the U.S. Cavalry Museum as Museum Specialist. He became the Director/Curator of the Museum in 1979 and Chief of the Museum Division, DPTMS, in 1990. His outside interests and involvements include work with the Boy Scouts of America, the Kansas State University Art Museum, and the Knights of Columbus.

Some of Van Meter's many civilian awards include the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, Commander's Award for Civil Service with Two Clusters, Department of the Army Handicapped Employee of the Year, Department of Defense Outstanding Handicapped Employee of the Year, U.S. Jaycees Outstanding Young Man of America, Knights of Malta, U.S. Armor Association—Order of St. George, and the Disabled American Veterans Association's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of 1992.

Richard N. Current to Receive 1995 Nevins-Freeman Award

The Civil War Round Table Executive Committee has selected noted historian Richard N. Current as its 1995 Nevins-Freeman honoree. Current is University Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and is generally acknowledged to be the "dean of Lincoln scholars." His previous awards include the Bancroft Prize, which he received jointly with J.G. Randall for *Lincoln the President: Last Full Measure* (1955). His many other books include *The Lincoln Nobody Knows* (1958) and *Those Terrible Carpetbaggers: A Reinterpretation* (1988). His acceptance address is scheduled for October 13.

President's Note:

I want to extend a very special thank you to all the people who worked so hard to make our October Kentucky Bluegrass Tour the big success that it was. Over the past year, Tour Chairman Brooks Davis, Registrar Richard McAdoo, and committee members Charles Bednar and Joe Wisehart—along with our Kentucky tour guides—spent many hours of planning and effort. Thanks! (A report on the tour from the tour chairman will appear in the December issue of this Newsletter.)

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Forbes, Edwin. *Thirty Years After: An Artist's Memoir of the Civil War*. Introduction by William J. Cooper, Jr. LSU Press. 1993. \$65.00. Original of 1890.
- Fremantle, Arthur J. L. *Three Months in the Confederate States, April-June 1863*. Introduction by Gary W. Gallagher. U. of Nebraska Press. Pbk. \$9.95. Original of 1863.
- Gallagher, Gary W. *The Second Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership*. Kent State U. Press. 1993. \$24.00.
- Gleeson, Ed. *Rebel Sons of Erin: A Civil War Unit History of the Tenth Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Irish) Confederate Volunteers*. Guild Press of Indiana, Inc. 1993. \$29.95; pbk. \$19.95.

Richard Owens, from the history department of **Lewis University**, will address the Union League Club Civil War Round Table luncheon at noon on Monday, December 5. His topic will be "Often Before the Fall: Affirmation of Union Victory in November-December, 1864." He is the author of *The Peaceful Warrior*, a biography of Union Colonel Horace Porter. For information and to make reservations, call 312-427-7800, extension 266.

Former President Brooks Davis recently addressed the Sons of Union Veterans in Glenview on "The Grand Army of the Republic." He will speak to the Louisville Civil War Round Table in April on "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln as Leaders."

Former President Kurt Carlson addressed the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table in Minneapolis on October 18. His topic was "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?"

David E. Long, who will be our **December 9 speaker this year**, appeared on television on October 29. The CBS program "Halloween!" featured a segment on "The Ghosts of Lincoln." Long discussed Abraham Lincoln's dreams, premonitions, and preoccupation with death.

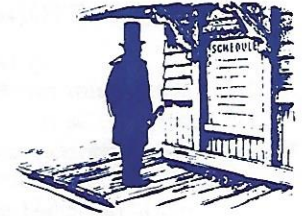
A new 29-cent stamp from the U.S. Postal Service will honor "The General," the Confederate locomotive that changed hands twice in Andrew's Raid in April 1862. The actual locomotive is on display at the Big Shanty Museum in Kennesaw, Georgia.

Schimmelfennig Boutique

The history of The Round Table, *The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship*, by Barbara Hughett, is available for \$30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

In addition to The Round Table history and *The Continuing Civil War*, the essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes, Civil War Buff posters and T-shirts, CWRT T-shirts, polos, and sweatshirts.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

- November 11:* Terry Van Meter on "The Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac"
- December 9:* David E. Long on "I Shall Never Recall a Word": Emancipation and the Race Issue in the 1864 Presidential Election Campaign"
- January 13:* James I. (Bud) Robertson, Jr., on "New Viewpoints on Stonewall Jackson"
- February 17:* Ralph G. Newman on "A Handful of Lincoln and Civil War Authors" (Please note: this is the **third** Friday of the month.)
- March 10:* Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., on "Give Us a Flag: Afro-Confederate Loyalty in Civil War Virginia"
- April 14:* William Hanchett on "Lincoln's Assassination After 130 Years"
- May 3-7:* Annual Spring Battlefield Tour—Charleston, Columbia, and Savannah
- May 12:* Tamara Moser Melia on "James B. McPherson and the Ideals of the Old Army"
- June 9:* John Y. Simon on "Forging a Commander: Ulysses S. Grant and the First Year of the Civil War"

New Members

- Dr. Peter H. Jacobsohn, 3819 W. LeGrande Boulevard, Mequon, WI 53092, 414-242-0931
- Janet Maurer, 5934 W. Foster, Chicago, IL 60630
- Nancy Mitchell McCabe, 3243 S. Utah Street, Arlington, VA 22206, 703-820-3535
- John Murray, 5934 W. Foster, Chicago, IL 60630
- Mary S. Ralston, 734 Noyes Street, Evanston, IL 60201, 708-328-0814

Changes of Address

- Anthony Abboreno, 505 W. Parkview Terrace, Algonquin, IL 60102-1952
- Robert Balzekas, 4030 Archer, Chicago, IL 60632
- John Chalmers, 6733 N. Greenview Avenue, Chicago, IL 60626-4207
- Susan Phillips, 2308 Hastings, Evanston, IL 60201
- Joseph Putz, 11757 Seagull Lane, Palos Heights, IL 60463, 708-448-7136
- Armin G. Weng, 3953 Highway 61, Blue Grass, IA 52726
- Steven D. Ziegler, 769 S. Locust Street, Pontiac, IL 61764-2632
- David Zucker, 3100 N. Lake Shore Drive, #206, Chicago, IL 60657

An article on our October 7 Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and honoree Alan T. Nolan's address appeared in the October 12 issue of the *Inside Chicago* community newspapers. The article was written by R. Thomas Butt, who attended the October meeting.