

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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May, 1989

Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons on "Fort Fisher: Amphibious Finale to the Civil War"

by Barbara Hughett

Fort Fisher, a massive L-shaped fort, nearly a mile-long on its seaward face, was a key defense to Wilmington, North Carolina. Instead of masonry, it was built of sand and dirt over a log framework. Twenty-five feet thick and ten to thirty feet high, it was sodded with tough marsh grasses to absorb shot and shell. Its 47 big guns were a threat to any Union warship attempting to close in on a blockade runner. The first attempt to capture Fort Fisher, on December 24-25, 1864, ended in failure. General Benjamin Butler, commanding the land forces, packed an old ship with gunpowder and exploded it near Fort Fisher, hoping the fort would be destroyed in the blast. The blast did little, except, perhaps, to awaken the fort's inhabitants. The naval fleet, under Rear Admiral David Porter, then began bombarding the fort, but inflicted little damage. Though Butler did manage to get some of his troops onto the beach, he soon decided that the assault would be too costly, and withdrew his men. This fiasco gave General Grant the excuse he needed to relieve Butler of his command.



Edwin H. Simmons

The second assault on Fort Fisher took place on January 13-15, 1865, with the more resolute General Alfred Terry in command of the landing forces. General Porter continued as commander of naval operations. Terry executed the successful landing, the effects of which were to seal-off the South's last remaining Atlantic port still open to blockade runners. Even so, the final attack was poorly coordinated. If the effort spent in subsequent recriminations, charges and countercharges had been used instead for careful analysis, Fort Fisher might have yielded all the lessons, negative and positive, required for a viable amphibious doctrine.

On May 12th, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.) will speak to The Civil War Round Table. The topic of his address will be "Fort Fisher: Amphibious Finale to the Civil War." General Simmons, who has served as Director of Marine Corps History and Museums since 1972, is a founder of the Marine Corps Historical Foundation, as well as a trustee, governor, or director of a number of other professional and patriotic organizations. He has served as president of both the American Military Institute



481st Regular Meeting

Edwin Simmons
on

Fort Fisher: Amphibious Finale to the Civil War

Friday, May 12, 1989

Quality Inn

Halsted and Madison

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$15.00 per person

Entree: Chicken Parmesan with Linguini, Fish,
or Fruit Plate



Executive Committee Meeting

President Bill Sullivan has announced there will be an Executive Committee meeting on May 12 at 5 p.m. at the Quality Inn. The main item on the agenda is selection of the 1990 Battlefield Tour site. All officers, current committee chairpersons, and past presidents are urged to attend.

and the 1st Marine Division Association, and as vice-president of the U.S. Commission on Military History. A native of New Jersey, he is a graduate of Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and received his master's degree from Ohio State University. He is the author of *The United States Marines, 1775-1975*, and his writings have been published in numerous magazines, books, encyclopedias, and professional journals. His latest book is *Marines*, Volume I in the new Bantam Books series, *The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War*.

General Simmons' active duty in the Marine Corps extended from June, 1942, when he resigned an Army
(continued on page 4)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Phone: (312) 944-3085

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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 Dan Weinberg, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, IL 60611.

The annual Round Table picnic will take place at 11:00 a.m. on July 23 at Gillson Park in Wilmette. Further details will be sent to members.

James M. McPherson, our February speaker, was recently awarded a Pulitzer Prize in History for his *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Years*.

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park has acquired an original Civil War Printer's Chest. The chest, which is in excellent condition, is marked "Head Quarters Army of the Potomac, Printing Department." According to the newsletter of the Friends of Virginia Civil War Parks, this is one of two such chests known to exist; the other is owned by the Smithsonian Institution.

Battlefield Preservation Report

by Daniel J. Josephs

According to Dennis Frye of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), a national conservation group has bought two parcels of real estate located outside the boundaries of the U.S. National Park Service property at Antietam. These parcels are the Reel Farm and Ward Farm areas. Previously, as reported in this column, Congress passed a bill granting money to the National Park Service to purchase land located within their boundaries at Antietam. The National Park Service could not purchase these two areas as they are not located within these property boundaries. One parcel is 47 acres and the other is 99 acres. The acquisition of these parcels was completed in December, 1988 and January, 1989. Mr. Frye stated that these parcels, located near the Piper Farm area, were the scene of the staging area and launching point of Confederate General Lafayette McLaws' attack into the West Woods, and of a primary Confederate artillery position. The Reel Farm was the site of a large field hospital in 1862. The Ward Farm did not exist at Antietam during the time of the battle.

According to Mr. Frye, this national conservation group has entered into a joint land management agreement with the U.S. National Park Service; as a result, the Park Service will manage these two parcels of land. This group is also in the process of purchasing 110 acres in the area of the Cornfield and North Woods. It is anticipated that this purchase will be completed by June of 1989. The National Park Service and SHAF support this acquisition, according to Mr. Frye. Mr. Frye noted that this group bought the areas of Antietam for the purpose of preservation and that it is not a land management organization and will not develop the areas. Rather, the aims of the group are to purchase historical areas, enlist somebody else to manage the property, and at some point to sell it either to the National Park Service or to other parties after placing easements on the historical areas to limit development. According to Mr. Frye, this national preservation group is also involved in a process of putting together a publication to identify threatened Civil War sites and of raising funds to preserve such sites.

Mr. Frye indicated that the acquisition of the Reel Farm and the Ward Farm greatly aids the preservation of Antietam since the National Park Service could not presently purchase these parcels as they are located outside the boundaries of the battlefield park. Also, due to these acquisitions, the National Park Service can use the funds granted by Congressional legislation to purchase or acquire other threatened parcels of land located within the boundaries of the battlefield park at Antietam, according to Mr. Frye.

Hallowed Ground, the newsletter of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, reports that the APCWS treasury began 1989 \$117,508 richer, thanks to the generosity of the Gilder Foundation and the support of APCWS members. The Gilder Foundation of New York City, as reported last year in this newsletter, challenged the Association to raise \$50,000 between May 30 and December 31, 1988, promising a \$50,000 gift if this was accomplished. Only donations of \$250 or more qualified for the challenge. Unofficial figures indicate that 145 donors contributed \$67,508.42 to the campaign. Richard Gilder, Jr. presented APCWS President Gary Gallagher with a check for \$50,000 recently at a ceremony in Port Republic.

April Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

The Army of the Tennessee served and fought under several designations, including the Department of Southeast Missouri and the Department of Cairo, before becoming the Army of the Tennessee in the fall of 1862. On April 14th, fellow member Charles Wesselhoeft spoke before 119 members and guests at the 480th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. The topic of his address was "The Army of the Tennessee Under Grant," a subject on which he has spent over 10 years of research. His interest in the Army began much earlier, when he learned that his maternal grandfather, Julius Wintermayer, had been part of it. Mr. Wintermayer, a corporal in the 14th Wisconsin, fought with the Army from Shiloh through Vicksburg.

"The axiom," Charlie observed, "about the man being everything to an army is borne out by the early career of the Army of the Tennessee. Grant was not a hail-fellow-well-met, but he was able to see the nub of a military problem and take action." The story of the Army began in the fall of 1861, when Ulysses S. Grant, a brigadier general of volunteers, was assigned to command the District of Southeast Missouri, headquartered at Cairo, Illinois. His first action as commander was to lead an attack on a Confederate camp at Belmont, Missouri. Belmont was located across the Mississippi River from Columbus, Kentucky, which was being held by rebel forces. Grant and his men engaged the Confederates and drove them back. "To his inexperienced men," Charlie remarked, "this was a heady victory." The troops then broke ranks and spent a great deal of time looting the camp. Finally, Grant was able to restore order and start them back to their boats. The troops were astonished to find that, in the time that had passed, the rebels had crossed the river and were on their line of retreat. It was at this point that Grant reminded them that since they had cut their way in, they could cut their way out. And that's what they did. This was the first example of Grant's leadership abilities during the war.

In February of 1862, Grant led the Army in a daring and successful campaign against the crucial Forts Henry and Donelson in western Tennessee. It was when General Simon Bolivar Buckner, commanding the Confederates at Fort Donelson, sent a note to ask the terms of surrender, that Grant sent back his famous reply which ended: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." Grant was an instant hero to the victory-hungry North and the news media hailed him as "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

Throughout this time, Grant had experienced difficulties with his superior commander, General Henry Wager Halleck. Grant's successes in battle did not seem to alter Halleck's low regard for him. In February of 1862, Halleck wrote to General McClellan, complaining about Grant and mentioning that he had heard reports that Grant's drinking problem had recurred. Grant asked to be relieved and requested a Court of Inquiry, but Halleck would not permit it. When Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas telegraphed Halleck, making it clear that President Lincoln wanted to know the full circumstances, Halleck backed down on his accusations, and Grant rejoined his Army. The Battle of Shiloh took place on April 6th and 7th, with its heavy Union casualties. Again, Grant was criticized, but Lincoln stood by him, saying: "I can't spare this man—he fights." In July of 1862, Halleck was summoned to Washington to

become Commander in Chief. Grant took over the Army and suffered no more from the slings and arrows of Halleck.

In the fall of 1862, the Army won victories at Iuka and Corinth, Mississippi. On October 25th, the Army officially became the Army of the Tennessee, with Grant as its commander. This was followed by the long, determined expedition into Vicksburg, finally resulting in the Confederate surrender of the city on July 4, 1863. Grant received a telegram from Washington on July 7th, which said: "It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you have been appointed a major general in the regular army to rank from July 4, the date of your capture of Vicksburg." After General Rosecrans' misfortunes at Chickamauga in the fall of 1863, Grant was summoned to meet with Secretary of War Stanton. He was given orders to command the new Military Division of the Mississippi, and went on to still greater things—as did the Army of the Tennessee.

Fellow member Lee Moorehead will conduct a tour of Lincoln sites in Springfield and New Salem on July 28-30. The cost is \$48 per person and will include talks by Thomas Schwartz, curator of the Lincoln collection at the Illinois State historical Library, Dr. George Painter, and Lewis P. Mallow, Jr. The tour bus leaves from and returns to Batavia, Illinois. Hotel and meal costs are not included. For information, contact Lee at 879-8441.

Special events are being planned to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Siege of Petersburg and the Battle of the Crater on July 28-30. For information, contact Merlin Sumner, 125th Petersburg Commemoration Committee, 209 High Street, Petersburg, VA 23803.

The annual luncheon meeting of the Stephen A. Douglas Association will be held on June 3rd, at 12:30 p.m., at Ditka's restaurant. The luncheon will feature an address by Dr. Mark E. Neely, Jr. For further information and reservations, call 787-1860.

Nominating Committee Report

Dan Weinburg, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, has announced the following proposed slate of officers for the 1989-90 year:

President	Richard W. McAdoo
Senior Vice President	David R. Richert
Vice President	Joseph L. Wisheart
Vice President	Mary J. Abroe
Secretary	Marlan H. Polhemus
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Trustee	Steven Horton
Trustee	Dale Weitman
Trustee	L. Bradford Gregg

(One-year term, to complete the unexpired term of Keith Rocco, who is nominated for the position of Assistant Treasurer)

The election will be held during the May meeting, at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor. Three current trustees, Wayne Anderson, Luann Elvey, and Robert J. Schell, will remain in office as they complete their two-year terms.

The New Books compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Beach, William H. *The First New York (Lincoln) Cavalry From April 19, 1861 to July 7, 1865*. Bacon Race Books, 3717 Pleasant Ridge Road, Annandale, VA 22003. 1988. \$30. Original of 1902.

Cornish, Dudley T. *The Sable Arm*. University Press of Kansas. 1987. \$25.00; pbk. \$9.95. Original of 1956.

Dew, Charles B. *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works*. Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1987. \$30.00. Original of 1966.

Knight, Wilfred. *Red Fox: Stand Watie's Civil War years in Indian Territory*. The Arthur H. Clark Co., Box 230, Glendale, CA 91209. 1988. \$27.50.

Vandiver, Frank. *Their Tattered Flags: The Epic History of the Confederacy*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press. 1987. pbk \$12.95. Original of 1970.

Don Jensen 1936-1989

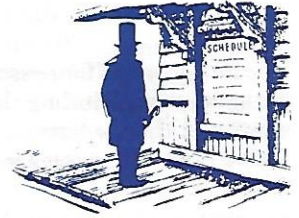
by Richard McAdoo

Don Jensen, or "Jensen," as most of us called him, had been a part of The Round Table for 23 years. He had assisted with many projects and served on various committees; he was treasurer, a tour chairman, and above all, he was a caring and sharing member of our group. If you are a new member who did not have the pleasure of meeting Jensen, you missed sharing a special friend who would be embarrassed by this acknowledgement. You would have found that Don was not outgoing, but very receptive. You would have said that Don was friendly, sociable and of a congenial disposition, or maybe that he had a smiling voice, a warm laugh and an amusing wit. Perhaps you would have said that he projected a twinkle of devilishness. Each of you would have a distinguishing trait to describe Don, but I think, that you would agree that he truly had charisma... that natural and personal magic and leadership that few possess.

For those of us who were around Jensen, we knew him as a person who voiced his membership and support of many of the groups and organizations who strive to preserve our battlefields, our heritage, and our freedoms. You could count on Don to remember the names of members from the past, prior speakers and their topics, happenings and events of our group, the order of the battlefield tours and all the tales, true or false, from those tours. Our upcoming battlefield tour will not be the same for those of us who remember Don as a perpetual bus marshall who helped move us from here to there, kept us from getting run over, yelled about looking down cannon barrels and took orders for soda pop and beer as he made his way to the back of the bus and the cooler.

Maybe your thoughts of Jensen will be of him as the chief who kept law and order among the cronies who always sat by the door, or the fellow who saw that his table got extra rolls, their milk, coffee, or tea—and yes, an occasional extra salad and dessert. But most importantly, remember. Remember Don in that special way that is important to you. Remember that he was a friend to each of you and a *very special friend* to most... please take a moment and remember Don Jensen.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

May 12: Brig. Gen. Edwin Simmons, USMC (Ret.) on "Fort Fisher: Amphibious Finale to the Civil War."

June 9: John Y. Simon on "Edward D. Baker, Ball's Bluff, and the Politics of Command."

July 23: Annual picnic.

September 8: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner. Recipient of Award: Mark E. Neely, Jr.

October 6: Gary Gallagher on "Porter Alexander's Unpublished Reminiscences." (Note: This is the first Friday of the month.)

November 10: Herbert Schiller, M.D. on "The Bermuda 100 Campaign of 1864."

December 8: Armin Weng, topic to be announced.

New Members

Keith Cantine, 4427 N. Mozart, Chicago, IL 60625, 312/588-7826.

Pauline S. Roth, 337 Main St., Schwenksville, PA 19473.

Changes of Address

Steven C. Filipowski, 89 Evergreen Court, Deerfield, IL 60015.

Larry Gibbs, 4187 W. 194th Place, Country Club Hills, IL 60487 312/957-4662.

Lester Joseph, 2150 Boutourse Ave., #204, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

A new Civil War Round Table, known as the Inland Empire Civil War Round Table, has been formed in San Bernardino, California.

We report with sadness the recent death of long-time member and frequent battlefield tour companion Raymond Jankovich, Sr. Our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

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commission gained through the ROTC at Lehigh University to take a Marine Corps commission, through a first retirement in 1972, an immediate recall to active duty to continue as the Corps historian, to a second retirement in 1978. After a brief pause, he came back to his old position as a civil servant. During his active duty years, he served in combat in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, with a range of duties that included command or acting command of every level of unit, from platoon through division. He has received fourteen personal decorations, including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, three Legions of Merit, the Purple Heart, two Bronze Stars, and the Meritorious Service Medal.