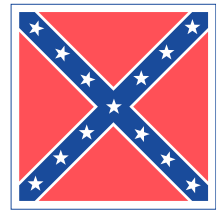


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXXV, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

December 2014



737th REGULAR MEETING

★★★★★

Friday, December 12th

★★★★★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$49 - Members/Non-members

Entrée: Rib of Beef or Baked Salmon

Please Note:

Make your reservations by Wednesday, December 10, by emailing dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org, or calling 630 460-1865 with the names of your party and choice of entrée.

If a cancellation becomes necessary after dinner reservations have been made, please email us at dinnerreservations@chicagocwrt.org and/or call us at 630-460-1865.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:15 p.m., for a charge of \$10 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$12 with a validated parking sticker. Other parking is available at 437 N. Orleans.

James Ogden Nevins-Freeman Address on The Engagement at Reed's Bridge

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

In 1974, The Civil War Round Table of Chicago established the Nevins-Freeman Award, and bestows it annually on an individual whose advancement of American Civil War scholarship and support for the Round Table movement warrant special recognition. The award itself is designed as a generous financial donation to a historical preservation project chosen by the recipient.

This award is named for two men whose legacies have come to be synonymous with the Civil War era: historians Allan Nevins and Douglas Southall Freeman.

The very first Nevins-Freeman recipient was famed author Bruce Catton, a Civil War Round Table of Chicago charter member. Other winners include Ralph G. Newman (1975), T. Harry Williams (1976), Ed Bearss (1980) and Marshall Krolick (1990).

We're proud to announce that the 2014-15 Nevins-Freeman Award is presented to esteemed historian **Jim Ogden**, our friend, and the friend of many CWRTs.

His address will be on the engagement at Reed's Bridge, part of the Battle



James Ogden

of Chickamauga. On September 18, 1863, Braxton Bragg ordered Bushrod Johnson's division to cross Chickamauga Creek and turn the Union Army's left (northern) flank. Robert Minty's Union cavalry brigade covered the approaches to the Bridge, and delayed the Confederates for much of the day, upsetting Bragg's timetable and giving the Union army the time to shift to meet the threat.

James Ogden III has been chief historian at Chickamauga and Chattanooga since 1988. A native of tidewater Maryland and a graduate of Frostburg State University, Jim

worked as an interpreter at Point Lookout State Park and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and as a Federal Law Enforcement Ranger at Russell Cave National Monument. In 1986 he transferred to the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park where he trained as a Park Service historian under Robert K. Krick. Jim has appeared on episodes of the History Channel's "Civil War Journal" and "Civil War Combat." He is currently writing a history of the 48th Tennessee Infantry Regiment. Ogden lives in North Georgia.



USS MONITOR CONSERVATORS PREPARE TURRET COAT FOR EXHIBIT

By Scott C. Boyd

(November 2014 *Civil War News*)

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – “This coat embodies the struggle to get off the ship. It is an unbelievably personal item,” says David Krop, Director of the USS Monitor Center at The Mariners’ Museum. “It speaks to the story of the night of the sinking of the Monitor.”

The Union ironclad with its iconic rotating gun turret, which fought the Confederate CSS Virginia on March 9, 1862, in the first battle between ironclads, sank while being towed off Cape Hatteras, N.C., on Dec. 31, 1862.

The wreck was located in 1973. Its turret was recovered in 2002 with fragments of the coat inside.

The coat may seem commonplace at first glance – a dark blue double-breasted wool sack coat. In fact, it is quite a rarity, according to Krop.

“Nobody has a surviving Civil War-era double-breasted sack coat of a Navy context,” he says.

The coat is 85 percent intact. Krop describes a virtual jigsaw puzzle of over 180 fragments which have been painstakingly cared for and assembled by a team of conservators and consultants.

Too fragile to be stitched back together and mounted on a manikin, instead the pieces have been placed together on six flat panels that are nine feet long when placed side-by-side, according to Will Hoffman, Senior Conservator at the USS Monitor Center.

Krop hopes the coat will be ready for exhibit at the USS Monitor Center by next summer. It will be a “comprehensive interpretation” of the coat. It would probably be shown in the reconstructed Monitor officers’ quarters, along with a replica

on a manikin to show how it would have appeared in 1862.

The coat’s owner is unknown. Krop says it was most likely a civilian coat modified for military use with official U.S. Navy hard rubber buttons, patented by the Goodyear Rubber Company.

Conservator Hoffman quotes the conservation report’s description: “A pilot’s coat, circa 1861, double-breasted, with a single vent in the center back, and two-part coat sleeves, made of Navy blue wool Melton, having eight main pattern pieces with accompanying collar and under-collar pieces, buttons, pocket pieces, and fragments.”

Krop says eight of the Goodyear buttons were found detached nearby, since the cotton stitching attaching them had disintegrated over time. The buttons would have been in four rows of two buttons each, as indicated by the slits in the coat’s front.

There were no lapels or any insignia to indicate rank, according to Krop, and the buttons were not the brass kind associated with officers.

The coat was found in 2002 when the turret was recovered. The turret was upside down under the ship’s hull. The crumpled coat was concreted to the turret’s roof, covered with nine feet of sediment from its 140 years under water.

Although the remains of two sailors were discovered in the turret, the coat was located off to one side of them.

“It was piled-up wool components that made up a coat,” Krop says. It was found in five or six large concreted “blobs” of fiber.

At the time the archeologists examining the turret were

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The only requirement for membership in The Civil War Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Membership Committee, 1039 Hinswood, Darien, Illinois 60561, or editor@chicagocwrt.org.

performing a major “triage” of all the contents, identifying those artifacts in the greatest need of immediate treatment, and those which could be safely stored and examined later.

“We had 1,500 artifacts weighing 200 tons,” he notes.

The coat “blobs” were put into cold, dark storage in freshwater to prevent biological organisms from growing and degrading them prior to active treatment, according to Krop.

Subsequently a couple of textile experts joined the staff and began what he describes as “a six-year process of documenting, cleaning, deconcreting, removing orange iron staining, and ascertaining what the pieces were.”

By 2012 all the coat components were stabilized. ...

“We know sailors who survived [the Monitor sinking] had written accounts of stripping out of their heavy outer clothing, kicking off their shoes and boots, leaving coats behind – this coat embodies that,” Krop says.

“Somebody was wearing this on December 31, 1862. They saw the pounding surf, the heavy water, they took it off, dropped it, and maybe they survived, maybe they didn’t.”

November Meeting

By Mark Marranga

Stephen E. Towne spoke at the 735th Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table on U.S. Army Intelligence Operations in the Midwest during the Civil War, with special focus on the "Chicago Conspiracy." At the start of the war, northerners who opposed the war and the Lincoln administration policies planned to rise up, especially in the Midwest. These insurrectionists intended to combine with freed rebel soldiers and run riot in the north, divert federal troops to the north, halt the war effort and destroy Lincoln's prospect for re-election. Of the several attempts made, the plots targeting Camp Douglas in August and November 1864 were the most daring.

Historians have concluded that these plots collapsed due to the incompetence of the northern sympathizers who either pulled out at the last minute or inadvertently divulged their plans to government detectives. It has been thought that the plots were not legitimate threats due to the small number of plotters involved and that overwhelming military force could crush any uprising. The weight of historical judgment has been that the plots existed more in the imaginations of politicians than in reality.

Contrary to these assumptions, Towne argues that records in the national archives and other locations suggest something different. Both civil and military authorities genuinely feared revolutionary uprisings and closely investigated threats of insurrection in the Midwest.

Reports of secret organizations with large memberships in the Midwest in communication with confederate agents were taken seriously and officials worked diligently to neutralize these threats. Army commanders in all major Midwest cities cooperated to uncover anti-government conspiracies.

Army intelligence used informers and spies, intercepted private correspondence and postal mail independent of any central direction from Washington. In 1862, local officials, both civilian and military, discovered the secret groups which made up the Knights of the Golden Circle who opposed the war and Republican Party policies of abolition and centralization of power. Attorney General Bates and Interior Secretary Caleb Smith lacked the resources to investigate and prosecute these groups, thrusting the military into these roles.

Secret groups grew as opposition to the administration increased. Late in 1863 Army Intelligence scored a major coup. After its agents learned that the Knights had morphed into the Order of the American Knights who planned to attack POW camps in Ohio and Indiana, officers in Ohio arrested plotters in Cincinnati, Columbus and Covington, Kentucky and secured indictments and for conspiracy and treason.

In 1864, Confederate agents continued the effort to open a new front in the war by freeing prisoners at Camp Douglas as

well as at Johnson's Island where confederate officers were housed. One of Morgan's soldiers captured during the Ohio raid posed as an escaped prisoner and learned through southern sympathizers of an uprising in Chicago set to unfold during the Democratic Convention. The main conspirator, Thomas Henry Hines who with others had slipped secretly into the country from Canada, escaped, but Colonel Sweet's troops rounded up freed southern officers and uncovered caches of arms throughout the city. Records of the Sons of Liberty were seized, and the Provost Marshall arrested 96 men in connection with the plot.

The Chicago conspirators were tried before military commissions in Cincinnati in early 1865. These had less impact on the election than did the Camp Morton conspiracy trials of the Sons of Liberty which commenced in the fall of 1864. Nonetheless, the trials crippled Democrats for years as the party of pro-confederate conspirators. Towne concluded that intelligence efforts prevented three attempts at violent upheaval in Chicago, and the hope for a new 'northern' front. The army's extensive domestic espionage counteracted powerful and widespread underground organizations. The Chicago plots, part of a larger effort throughout the Midwest to subvert the union war effort and help the Confederacy win independence, were defeated by concerted intelligence efforts which helped preserve the union.

GRAPESHOT



On Tuesday, Nov. 11th, the **Sons of Union Veterans** and the Village of Bolingbrook honored Civil War veterans buried at Hillcrest Cemetery, Bolingbrook. Grave markers were installed for three Civil War veterans buried there: Charles E. Clark, Edward George and Edward Sprague, all of the 72nd IL Infantry.

On December 12th at 12 noon (Central) **Timothy B. Smith** and **John Marszalek** will be featured speakers at the **Kenosha Civil War Museum in Kenosha, WI**. Learn more about the program at <http://www.kenosha.org/wp-civilwar/events/>.

On Dec. 6th, **Rob Girardi** will present "The Murder of Maj. Gen. William "Bull Nelson", to the Louisville, KY CWRT.

On Dec. 10th, at the North Shore Senior Center: **Leslie Goddard** will present "Gone With the Wind and the Construction of Civil War Memory" Leslie will present this program Dec. 14th, at the Eisenhower Branch Chicago Public Library.

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Sixty plus years of audio recordings of CWRT lectures by distinguished historians are available and can be purchased in CD format. For pricing and a lecture list, please contact Hal Ardell at hal229@ameritech.net or phone him at (773) 774-6781.

Each meeting features a book raffle, with proceeds going to battlefield preservation. There is also a silent auction for books donated by Ralph Newman and others, again with proceeds benefiting battlefield preservation.

More Upcoming Civil War Events

- Dec. 5th, Northern Illinois CWRT: Pat McCormick on "The Red River Campaign"
- Dec. 7th, McHenry County CWRT: Holiday Brunch
- Dec. 10th, Union League Club of Chicago: Tim Smith will talk about his new book, Shiloh: Conquer or Perish
- Dec. 11th, Lake County CWRT: Christmas Party
- Dec. 11th, Milwaukee CWRT: Jim Ogden, "The Action at Reed's Bridge"
- Dec. 17th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Greg Biggs on "Buckeyes in Gray"
- Dec. 18th, South Suburban CWRT: Holiday Party
- Dec. 19th, Salt Creek CWRT: Rob Girardi on "The Murder of Bull Nelson"

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at editor@chicagocwrt.org or (630) 297-8046.

Bulletin Board



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated*.

Jan. 9, 2015: John Horn on "George Barnard and the 12th Virginia Infantry"

Feb. 1: Leslie Goddard on "Gone With the Wind and the Construction of Civil War Memory"

March 13: Thomas Huntington on "Searching for George Gordon Meade"

April 10: Michael Burlingame on "The Assassination of President Abraham Lincoln"

May 8: Eric Leonard on "Cartel, Code and Consequences at Andersonville"

June 12: Garry Adelman on "4D Civil War Photography Extravaganza"

Virual Book Signing

Join the **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop** on **December 11th at 6:00pm (Central)** when we welcome **Timothy Smith** and **John Marszalek** to the program. Smith will be discussing his new book, Shiloh: Conquer or Perish. Marzalek will be discussing his new book, Lincoln and the Military. Learn more about these books and order yours at http://virtualbooksigning.net/book-information/#anchor_2.

150 Years Ago - December 1864

Dec. 1st: The Union army, commanded by George Thomas, entrenched itself in Nashville. John Bell Hood's Confederate army takes position just south of the city.

10th: Gen. Sherman's Union army arrived outside Savannah, finishing their March to the Sea.

12th: Thomas telegraphed Grant with the information that he would attack Hood as soon as the weather improved.

13th: In a further blow to the defenders of Savannah, Sherman's men take Fort McAllister, establishing a route to the sea that would allow the Union Navy to supply his army.

15th-16th: Battle of Nashville. General Thomas's union army attacks and routs Confederate forces under Hood.

20th: The Confederate defenders evacuate Savannah.

21st: Sherman entered Savannah. The Confederates left behind in the city 250 heavy artillery guns and 25,000 bales of cotton.

22nd: Sherman telegraphed Lincoln the following: "I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah."

24th-25th: Ben Butler's Union forces started an attack on Fort Fisher in North Carolina. This fort defended the only remaining port open to the Confederacy - Wilmington. A rumor that Confederate reinforcements were on their way convinces Butler to withdraw.

The CWRT in the Past

73 Years Ago (Dec. 1941)—Ralph Newman spoke on "General Benjamin Butler"

50 Years Ago (Dec. 1964)—Stanley F. Horn spoke on "The Battle of Nashville"

25 Years Ago (Dec. 1989)—Armin Weng spoke on "The Gods of War and the Prince of Peace"

10 Years Ago (Dec. 2004)—Dr. David Zarefsky spoke on "Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery"

VETERANS DAY at ROSEHILL

On Sunday, November 9th, **Rosehill Cemetery** (located at 5800 North Ravenswood Avenue in Chicago) hosted its annual **Veterans Day Memorial** to the American Soldier. The 1st Michigan Engineers paid tribute to its recently deceased member, Sgt. Major Jerry Feinstein, the organizer of the event for the last 25 years. Re-enactors, representing all periods in American military history, fired several salutes.



Happy Holidays!