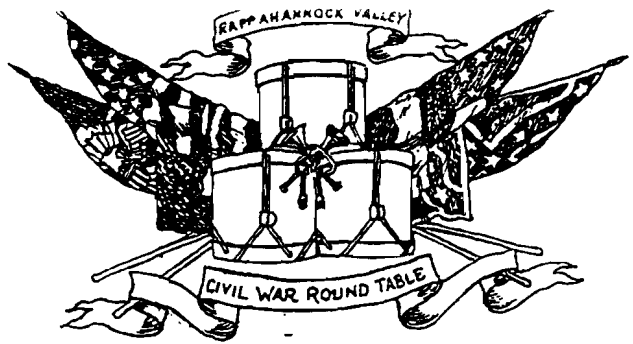


DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock
Valley Civil War Round Table



Vol. 9, No. 12

December 1998

After Gettysburg

Speaker: Dane Hartgrove

Topic: The Bristoe Station Campaign, October 1863

When: Monday, December 14, 1998. Social at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Location: Holiday Inn North, on Rt. 17 in Stafford, near the I-95 interchange

Dinner: The cost for dinner is \$14.00. Reservations are required and must be made by Thursday, December 10. Make reservations by calling **Mac Wyckoff, (540) 786-2470** or **Elsa Lohman, (540) 373-1672**. If you leave a message on an answering machine, please spell your last name for clarification. Please remember that there is no longer a sign-up sheet for the dinner. In order to have a reservation, you must call Mac or Elsa by the deadline stated above. If you make a reservation and find that you will not be able to attend the dinner, please call to cancel as soon as possible.

Dane Hartgrove is too well known (perhaps notorious would be more appropriate) to RVCWRT members to need much of an introduction. He has perpetrated numerous defamations of Ambrose E. Burnside and Braxton Bragg, which he justifies on the grounds that incompetence should be thoroughly identified in historical situations in order to discourage its perpetuation in our time. A long-time employee of the National Archives, he admits to knowing more than most people consider necessary about many past events that such people consider inconsequential.

Did you ever wonder what Robert E. Lee was doing between the Battles of Gettysburg and the Wilderness? No, he didn't take his annual summer vacation that August, as many of us do today. With one major exception, Lee spent most of his time between early August 1863 and early May 1864 camping with the Army of Northern Virginia in Culpeper, Madison, and Orange Counties.

That exception was the Bristoe Station campaign, which took place for the most part in the first half of October 1863. As we know, Lee dispatched Longstreet's Corps to reinforce Bragg's Army of Tennessee in September. After the Battle of Chickamauga, Lincoln transferred the 11th and 12th Corps from the Army of the Potomac to the Army of the Cumberland in order to partially match the Confederacy's shift in troop strength to its major western army. Lee then took the offensive with Hill's and Ewell's Corps in order to prevent the Union high command from sending even more men west from the Army of the Potomac. Meade initially retreated from positions along the Rappahannock and the Rapidan in order to avoid being outflanked, following the Orange and Alexandria Railroad northeast into Prince William County. But then A.P. Hill with an unpleasant surprise. Come learn more on Dec. 14!

Editor's Column

Congratulations to **Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park** on its recent **acquisition** of significant parcels of **land** on the site of **Jackson's Flank Attack**, as well as on the **easement** it secured on 167 acres of land **along Jackson's Flank March** at the time of its donation to Spotsylvania County by the Richard King Mellon Foundation.... Some of you may recall a bus tour RVCWRT made to the **Second Manassas Battlefield** several years ago. The tour began with a visit to **Thoroughfare Gap**, through which Longstreet's troops advanced to the relief of Jackson on August 28, 1862. Among the sites was **Beverley's Mill**, known as Chapman's Mill during the war, which was a focal point of the fighting as Longstreet's men forced their way through the gap. Sadly, a **fire** started by arsonists **gutted the mill** on October 22, destroying machinery, floors, and beams, and leaving only the stone walls standing. While the surviving structure is stable, it is unknown whether the owner, who lives in California, will choose to leave the walls standing.... There was a brief show of interest in **Hamilton's Thicket**, the site of **Longstreet's flank attack on May 6, 1864**, during the Battle of the Wilderness, earlier in the fall. The 455-acre tract is owned by **NTS Virginia**, the developer of Fawn Lake. The firm had been negotiating with the National Park Service for purchase of the tract for several years, and there was a bill in Congress that would have funded the purchase. The scent of money caused NTS Virginia to **hire the same law firm that represented Til Hazel** in his \$118 million sale of land at Manassas, a transaction that ranks high in the annals of human greed. Fortunately for the American public, Congress failed to pass the bill in question, and the vultures have gone off to roost somewhere else for the time being. **One of the principal stockholders** in NTS Virginia is former Washington Redskins coach **Joe Gibbs**. Hard to reconcile this little bout of financial hardball with Gibbs' nice-guy image, isn't it?... Finally, there's the curious adventure of the dog in the nighttime, or **what's really going on over there at Manassas**. Last month we reported that **Manassas National Battlefield** stood to lose a small amount of land to **VDOT** in a routine action that would **establish a turn lane** into a larger parking area near the Stone House at the corner of U.S. 29 and Virginia Rt. 234. Shortly thereafter, **Jerry Russell** of Heritagepac and Civil War Round Table Associates sent out an e-mail alert **announcing that the National Park Service had sold out entirely to VDOT** on the Manassas intersection issue at the behest of Congressman Frank Wolf. Jerry's alert appeared right around election day, when one might expect such events to be used for maximum political impact, and certainly had a depressing effect in some quarters. But it appears that accounts of a debacle at Manassas were not just premature, but positively erroneous. Jerry Russell recently sent out a letter written to him by **Annie Snyder**, the grande dame of Manassas preservation, in which she **corrects all the previous errors point by point**. It turns out that the National Park Service and VDOT have come to a meeting of the minds, with or without the help of Congressman Wolf. **VDOT** will in fact add only the one lane previously mentioned at the intersection, will transfer the remainder of the right-of-way there to the NPS, and **will work with the NPS to find a way to remove commuter traffic from the park**. For its part, the NPS has obtained \$2 million to complete planning for building a bypass around the park. It turns out that we are much closer to closing the roads that run through Manassas National Battlefield Park than any of us thought could possibly be the case. Thanks to Jerry for keeping this issue before the preservation community, to Annie for helping us all get our facts straight, and to a merciful God for allowing the good guys to win another one.... One last point: a timely **contribution to Central Virginia Battlefields Trust** in December might be one way to **avoid paying more tax** than you want to next April.

November Meeting Reviewed by Mac Wyckoff

North Carolina license plates contain the phrase "First in Flight." Some people have suggested (usually in jest) that the phrase refers to soldiers from the Tar Heel State that shunned combat during the Civil War rather than the Wright Brothers flight at Kitty Hawk. In reality, North Carolina had a combat record during the war that was second to none. Nearly the same number of North Carolinians served in the war as the number of white males aged 18-45 counted during the 1860 census. This suggests close to 100% involvement by the eligible population. Moreover, 40,000 North Carolina soldiers died during the war, more than from any other Southern state. In contrast, 17,000 Virginians died in the war.

At our November meeting, Keith Alexander entertained a large crowd as he discussed the history of a Tar Heel unit, the 33rd North Carolina Infantry. Alexander, a former Marine, is attending Mary Washington College and working part-time as a historian for the National Park Service. Alexander's presentation combined two diverse styles—Marine Corps drill sergeant and stand-up comic; it held the audience's attention and was often interrupted with laughter. The speaker effectively blended his experience on the drill field and in combat with his skills as a researcher to explain his points.

Often considered a unit from the western part of the state, the soldiers of the 33rd North Carolina came from counties representing all regions of the Tar Heel State. Organized during the fall and winter of 1861-1862, the unit saw its first action at New Bern, North Carolina, on March 14, 1862, against troops under General Ambrose E. Burnside. When the Federals broke the Confederate line, the 33rd North Carolina advanced from its position in reserve to temporarily save the day. However, the larger Union force turned both Rebel flanks, forcing the Southerners to retreat. The unit suffered approximately 200 casualties in its first fight, more than any other Confederate regiment in the battle. Alexander noted that the Federal units directly opposite the 33rd lost the highest number of men on the Northern side, indicative of the severe combat on this part of the battlefield.

The 33rd North Carolina fought in the Seven Days Campaign, at Second Manassas, and at Antietam (aka Sharpsburg, the Southern name for the battle, as Alexander reminded us). During the Battle of Fredericksburg, the 33rd North Carolina fought at Prospect Hill against a Union division commanded by General John Gibbon, a North Carolinian. It held its own in hard fighting, although a Union flanking effort eventually forced the regiment back to a point at which it made a second and this time successful stand. Despite intense fighting, the 33rd lost fewer than 50 men.

The brigade to which the 33rd North Carolina was assigned, commanded by General James H. Lane for most of the war, is most remembered for its actions at Chancellorsville. On the evening of May 2, the 33rd North Carolina deployed as skirmishers in front of Lane's Brigade. When General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and others rode out into the dark woods between Lane's battle line and the forward skirmishers, friendly fire from the 18th North Carolina ripped into the general's right hand and left arm. Although Lane's Brigade, and the 18th North Carolina in particular, are sometimes criticized for their role in the incident, Alexander maintained that the only person at fault in the tragedy was "Stonewall" himself, who went out in front of Lane's men without informing them. The following day found the brigade in bloody combat in the dense woods just south of the modern Visitor Center. General Lane, for whom the football stadium at Virginia Tech is named, suffered a temporary mental breakdown, and was seen sitting on the ground in tears.

The brigade's next action came in the small Pennsylvania college town named Gettysburg, where it was one of the few units that saw action on all three days of that battle. Interestingly, the 33rd's ranks contained one husband-and-wife team. Caught after deserting, the man was executed. His wife remained with the unit until the surrender at Appomattox.

On the first day of the Battle of the Wilderness, the brigade was lightly engaged. That night, Confederate General A.P. Hill failed to place his command in a combat formation in the Orange Plank Road sector of the battlefield. When Union General Winfield Scott Hancock attacked at daylight, Hill's command was badly mauled and forced to fall back. Lane's brigade tried to stem the tide from its position in reserve, and the 33rd North Carolina again suffered heavily. The casualties included its colonel, Clark Moulton Avery, who remained with his men despite being hit five times. He died six weeks later from his wounds. The colonel's brother, Captain Willoughby F. Avery was struck in the jaw. Alexander described the injury as a mortal wound that caused Avery's death ten years later. Another brother, Colonel Isaac Erwin Avery, who served in a different unit, had been mortally wounded at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863, while commanding Hoke's Brigade.

Although Alexander did not have time to elaborate, the 33rd North Carolina played major roles at the Mule Shoe in the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse and in the Petersburg Campaign before surrendering at Appomattox. The regiment's last commander, Colonel Robert V. Cowan, rode off rather than capitulate, leaving the task of surrender to Major James Weston. The unit's rolls had been reduced to nine officers, 128 men, and (interestingly) two women.

Alexander concluded his talk by saying that rather than being known as troops who were first in flight, North Carolina soldiers should be remembered for being "First at Bethel, Farthest at Gettysburg and Chickamauga, and Last at Appomattox."

RVCWRT Field Trips, Past and Future

Those of you who did not take part in RVCWRT's 1998 field trip to Chickamauga and Chattanooga, or who missed the accounts rendered by participants at our November meeting, are certainly unfortunate individuals. This year's field trip was fantastic! As you know, RVCWRT has established a policy of undertaking long field trips involving overnight stays in even-numbered years and short one-day round trips in odd-numbered years. The 1998 trip was perhaps even better than our 1996 trip to Gettysburg.

Our 1999 field trip will be a one-day round trip to Bermuda Hundred, where Confederate forces managed to neutralize Union Major General Benjamin F. Butler's Army of the James during a crucial period of the 1864 Overland Campaign.

At our November meeting, members were asked to take part in proportional voting to select one of four potential subjects for our Y2K field trip. The choices were Charleston, SC; Atlanta, GA; the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign; and the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. With all votes carefully tabulated, it turned out that Charleston, SC, was the clear winner in terms of both first-choice votes and overall preference. Atlanta, GA, came in second in terms of first-place votes, but was tied with the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign in terms of overall preference.

Our current plan is to hold the Y2K Charleston field trip in the same late October-early November time frame as this year's trip, unless those pesky Palmetto Staters secede again!

Mauriel Phillips Joslyn, ed. *A Meteor Shining Brightly: Essays on Maj. Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne*. Milledgeville, Georgia: Terrell House Publishing, 1997. ix + 299 pp. Notes, index. \$29.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-9662903-0-5

Reviewed for H-CivWar by Thomas A. DeBlack, Arkansas Tech University.

A Heroic and Tragic Figure

Recent months have witnessed a renewed interest in Patrick R. Cleburne. The February 1998 issue of *Civil War Times Illustrated* was largely devoted to Cleburne, and 1997 saw the publication of both Craig L. Symonds' *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas) and *A Meteor Shining Brightly: Essays on Maj. Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne*.

Although presented as a collection of essays, *A Meteor Shining Brightly* is more straightforward biography than interpretation. The eleven essays are presented in chronological order and discuss various aspects or periods of Cleburne's life from his early years in his native Ireland to his death at the battle of Franklin in November 1864. The contributors to this volume include several professional historians, a retired military man, a journalist, and the great-nephew of Cleburne's adjutant. Each is knowledgeable about Cleburne and the Civil War, but the quality of the writing varies greatly. Some chapters are thoroughly documented and well-written, while others are burdened with an overabundance of the names of lower-level officers or overly long excerpts from the *Official Records*.

In some instances, authors need better documentation to support their assertions. For example, in her discussion of the debacle at Spring Hill, Tennessee, in which John Bell Hood held Cleburne at least partly responsible for allowing a seemingly trapped Federal army to escape, Alethea Sayers notes that "the majority of historians believe the fault should rest on the army commander, General Hood" (p. 261). But neither in her text nor her endnotes does she list those historians or their works. Similarly, in his discussion of the battle of Franklin, Thomas Cartwright strongly challenges Hood's version of his last conversation with Cleburne. In *Advance and Retreat*, Hood recalled that Cleburne's final words to him before the battle were "General, I am ready, and have more hope in final success of our cause than I have had at any time since the first gun was fired." But Cartwright contends, "If this was not an outright falsehood by Hood, the comment by General Cleburne was sarcastic at best. Most historians feel it was the former" p. (269). Yet nowhere does Cartwright tell the reader who these historians are.

This reservation notwithstanding, Cartwright's essay on the battle of Franklin is one of the volume's better chapters. Cartwright, the executive director of the Carter House in Franklin, Tennessee, is one of the leading authorities on the battle of Franklin, and his expertise is evident here. His essay makes it perfectly clear that Cleburne knew Hood's plan for a massed frontal assault on the entrenched Federal position at Franklin was foolhardy and that the attack would mean certain death for many in his command. Yet, despite his misgivings and the animosity he felt toward Hood, Cleburne attempted to carry out the order with his usual courage and daring and gave his life in the process.

Another of the volume's better chapters is University of Arkansas at Little Rock historian Carl Moneyhon's essay on "Cleburne's Early War Years." Moneyhon contends that Cleburne's actions in 1862 "clearly demonstrated his leadership qualities" and "showed him to have traits of command and leadership that can be described only as natural" (p. 86). Cleburne was, he concludes, "born to command on the battlefield" p. 86). Moneyhon's essay is crisply written, and his endnotes reflect a thorough knowledge of relevant scholarship.

Perhaps the volume's most interesting essay is Mark M. Hull's "Concerning the Emancipation of the Slaves." Hull, an associate professor of history at Alabama A&M, clearly and concisely describes the most controversial action of Cleburne's career. In the winter of 1863-1864, Cleburne proposed that the Confederacy immediately begin training "a large reserve of the most courageous of our slaves, and further that we guarantee freedom within a reasonable time to every slave in the South who shall remain true to the Confederacy in this war" (p. 146). Cleburne assumed that patriotic Southerners would willingly give up their slaves if that was the price for Southern independence. "As events transpired,"

Hull notes, "it soon became clear that Major General Cleburne could not have been more wrong" (p. 146). Cleburne's proposal was met with rejection and rebuke by Confederate authorities and may have done severe damage to his chances for promotion. Ironically, the Confederate Congress passed a measure similar to Cleburne's in March 1865. By that time it was too late.

Hull's assertion that Cleburne "could not have been more wrong" about Southerners' willingness to give up slavery to save Southern independence is one of the few instances in the book where an author is willing to admit that Cleburne might ever have been wrong about anything, and that is one of the book's weaknesses. Craig Symonds (*Stonewall of the West*) paints Cleburne as an inspiring and courageous leader but also sees him as something of a romantic who uncritically accepted the rhetoric of Southern nationalists while failing to understand the crucial relationship of slavery to the Southern cause. Unfortunately, that uncritical and romantic attitude has also characterized many who have examined Cleburne's life, including some of those who contributed to *A Meteor Shining Brightly*.

The authors continually hammer home the point that Cleburne was not only a skilled and courageous commander but a man of sterling character, much beloved and respected by the men who fought under him. These are points that few seriously challenge. But in this book, any criticism of Cleburne is written off or explained away. For example, Mauriel Phillips Joslyn notes that "Cleburne's touchiness could frequently flare up" (p. 191). But she dismisses Gen. St. John Liddell's comment that "Cleburne was resentful, exceedingly ambitious, friendly to those useful to him, until they stood in the way of his advancement" as "a misreading" by someone "who had evidently not been accepted into [Cleburne's] inner circle of friends" (p. 191). "Cleburne was ambitious," Joslyn notes, "but never to the detriment of others" (p. 191). Never?

Even more disappointing is the book's failure adequately to address some of the more significant questions regarding this important and fascinating figure. Why was a man of such character, talent, and ability denied promotion to a higher command, especially in an army "bedeviled by command incompetence and operational mediocrity" (pp. vii-viii)? In *Stonewall of the West*, Symonds cites several of the most commonly offered explanations for Cleburne's failure to attain the rank of corps commander—his foreign birth, his lack of a West Point education, his participation in the movement to oust Braxton Bragg, his proposal for arming the slaves—but finds them all unsatisfactory, particularly in light of the promotion of Benjamin F. Cheatham, who shared most of the same liabilities. Symonds concludes that Cleburne's superior, friend, and mentor, William Hardee, may have concluded that "while Cleburne was unquestionably a superb division commander, he lacked that spark of independent initiative necessary to be effective in the command of a corps. . . . It may be that Hardee had come to believe that for all his virtues, Cleburne had reached his proper rank as a major general" (Symonds, p. 223). Symonds further notes that in the one instance in which Cleburne was in command of a corps (at Jonesboro, Georgia, in the Atlanta campaign), the results were disappointing. (See Symonds, p. 239)

This is a controversial assertion and one that deserves closer examination. But aside from Wiley Sword's statement in the foreword that Cleburne was the victim of "internecine political maneuvering" (p. viii), *A Meteor Shining Brightly* adds little to the discussion.

Another issue that calls for closer examination is the question of why Cleburne, a man of such obvious intelligence, so completely failed to understand the region and the cause for which he fought. Hull discusses some of the possible explanations for Cleburne's proposal to emancipate slaves in return for their service to the Confederacy, but he fails to explain how Cleburne could have so misread his adopted region.

In his foreword, Wiley Sword writes, "The story of Pat Cleburne is . . . one of the most notable and fascinating, if tragic, of the war" p. (viii). But the real tragedy goes far beyond Cleburne's failure to gain the promotion many felt he deserved and his untimely death. Cleburne gave his life in a useless battle, following orders he knew to be wrongheaded, from a commander whose competence he questioned, dying for a cause that he never fully understood. That, it seems, is the ultimate tragedy of Patrick Cleburne.

In Memoriam

It is our sad duty to report the passing of Ned Hall, a former RVCWRT Executive Committee member, on Thanksgiving Day. A lifelong resident of Northern Virginia, Ned served in the United States Marine Corps, then spent his career with the U.S. Secret Service. He was part of the presidential protective detail that accompanied President Kennedy to Dallas in November 1963, although he was not assigned to the motorcade on Friday, November 22. In more recent years, Ned served as a National Park Service volunteer at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. It was a privilege to have known him.

Calendar of Events

Through January 3 - "Shared Destiny: Encounters Along Bull Run, 1861" exhibit at the Manassas Museum. Tuesday-Sunday, 10-5. For information, (703) 368-1873.

Monday, December 7 - The Salem Baptist Church choir presents its annual concert of period music and Christmas carols in the original Salem Church edifice on Virginia Route 3, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 13 - Commemoration of Battle of Fredericksburg. Noon battle tour with Frank O'Reilly from City Dock to the Kirkland Memorial, where former Congressman Robert Mrazek will speak at 2 p.m. For information, (540) 371-0802.

Monday, December 14 - RVCWRT meeting. Dane Hartgrove speaks on the Bristoe Station Campaign.

Monday, January 11 - RVCWRT meeting. Jim Gannon speaks on the 6th Louisiana Infantry.

Monday, February 8 - RVCWRT meeting. Kelly O'Grady speaks on the Confederate Irish.

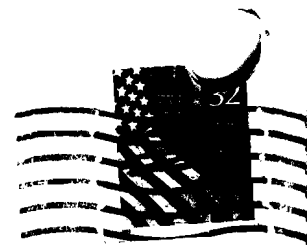
Monday, March 8 - RVCWRT meeting. Elsa Lohman and other RVCWRT ladies speak on the involvement of women in the Civil War.

Saturday & Sunday, March 27-28 - 1999 Conference on Preserving Virginia's Civil War Heritage, sponsored by RVCWRT, the National Park Service, and Mary Washington College's Department of History and American Studies. This year's conference will focus on lesser known aspects of the Battle of Chancellorsville. The Saturday sessions, held at the college, will consist of talks on various topics related to the battle, while the Sunday motor coach tour will visit many sites connected with Chancellorsville that are little known or often overlooked. For information, call Mac Wyckoff at 786-2470 or Dane Hartgrove at 659-1454.

Thanks to all the brave souls who've helped maintain the Aquia Landing artillery site this year!

Drum and Bugle is published monthly by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Roundtable, P.O. Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA. Dues are \$15 per year for individuals, \$25 for families, and \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the preservation of Civil War sites. Melanie Jordan, President; Mac Wyckoff, Vice President; Chuck Siegel, Secretary; Lou Allahut, Treasurer; Dane Hartgrove, Immediate Past President/Newsletter Editor; Steve Gambaro, John Graham, John Griffiths, Elsa Lohman, Ann McCarthy, Tom Quigley, and Mike Stevens, Executive Committee members.

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Don't Forget: Dinner Meeting, Monday, December 14.