

"The Late Unpleasantness" February 2008



South Bay Civil War Round Table

San Jose, California

February 26th Meeting Speaker:

Hal Hubis on "Dan Sickles at
Gettysburg"

Holder's Country Inn (408) 244-2798

998 South De Anza Blvd.(near Bollinger) San Jose,
California

Board Members

President: Gary Moore
(408)356-6216 gkmmaats@comcast.net
Vice President: Larry Comstock
(408)268-5418 richard-comstock@att.net
Treasurer: Renee Accornero
(408)268-7363 marimac50@aol.com
Recording Secretary: Kevin Martinez
(408)455-3367 kevinmartinez452@aol.com

Publicity Director: Bill Noyes
(408)374-1541 trplducer@aol.com
Preservation Chairman: John Herberich
(408)506-6214 jlherberich@earthlick.net
Membership Chairman: Fred Rohrer
(510)651-4484 frohrer@comcast.net
Newsletter Editor: Bob Krauth
(408)578-0176 rgkrauth@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A belated Happy Valentine's Day and President's Weekend. I hope the days were special and enjoyable for each of you.

It was great to see such an encouraging 'turn-out' at our January meeting. My appreciation to all who were in attendance. Equally encouraging was the addition of a new member, Tom Roza, to our group.

Once again, for those of you who missed the meeting, we missed you - and you missed a most thorough and informative presentation by our own John Herberich, who spoke on "The Evolution of the Cavalry in the Civil War". Our appreciation to John for his comprehensive overview of the formation, role, and contributions of the cavalry in the Civil War. A super job, John.

We anticipate that our February program will be equally as interesting and informative as once again, one of our own, Hal Hubis, will be speaking on "Dan Sickles at Gettysburg" This is a presentation I am sure you will not want to miss.

Our appreciation also to our Past President, Bob Hubbs, who gave an update on the "Alcatraz Living History Day" to be held on February 23rd, tentative dates and locations for our State Civil War Conferences for 2008, 2009, and 2010. Of particular interest are the plans for the 2010 State Conference, to be held on Alcatraz and jointly hosted and supported by the four Bay Area Civil War Round Tables - one of which is the SBCWRT. Once again our thanks to Bob for his involvement and contact with other Civil War Round Table groups in keeping our organization updated and aware of these important events.

Remember, that in addition to the program presentation there's our raffle, civil war quiz, announcements, discussions, and stimulating conversation related to all aspects of the Civil War.

I look forward to seeing each of you at our February 26th meeting. Gary Moore, President

Major General Daniel E. Sickles, Union Third Army Corps commander, was struck by a cannonball during the battle of Gettysburg. Sickles was on horseback when the 12-pound ball severely fractured his lower right leg. Sickles quieted his horse, dismounted, and was taken to a shelter where Surgeon Thomas Sims amputated the leg just above the knee. Shortly after the operation, the Army Medical Museum received Sickles' leg in a small box bearing a visiting card with the message "With the compliments of Major General D.E.S."



The leg of General Sickles on display at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center



Who was this Dan Sickles fella, anyway? Find out on Tuesday, February 26 when our own Hal Hubis gives us the full scoop.

Source for photos:

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/dsickles>

Gettysburg: From Battlefield to Civil War Shrine

*(The following article commemorated 150 years after the battle. It is included as a tie-in to this month's talk on General Sickles. **Warning:** it contains graphic imagery. It has been edited for brevity. – Editor)*

Mark Jenkins
for National Geographic News
July 14, 2003

The stench alone was overpowering. Even five miles (eight kilometers) away it was sickening. Great clouds of flies were equally loathsome. They hovered over the trampled crops, rocky woods, and blasted fields. They drifted over the litter of hats, coats, blankets, haversacks, diaries, love letters, Bibles, daguerreotypes, rifles, swords, and empty cartridge boxes to settle on the putrefying carcasses of perhaps 5,000 horses and over 7,000 young men rotting in the summer sun. The great battle had ended. One surviving soldier could only write: "This place called Gettysburg shall surely live in Hell for all of eternity."

...Once it was rich agricultural land, a place of barns and bountiful harvests and fruitful orchards. But in July 1863 it had become, as one witness said, "a vast charnel house of death."

Tons of artillery shells and an estimated seven million bullets had been fired. They had hit everything on the field: trees, rocks, fences, houses, and barns. They defoliated entire stretches of forest; they smashed through doors and windows to lodge in dining room tables or chests of drawers. And they hit horses and men with a smack or a thud, collapsing lungs, exploding skulls, splintering arms and legs.

Horses may have had the worst of it. Harnessed to artillery caissons and wagons, thousands were trapped in exposed positions and killed by shrapnel or bullets. Their carcasses littered the field; there was little anyone could do but burn them. Other horses survived, though often terribly wounded. Hundreds of these faithful animals, deemed too maimed for further service, were eventually led

into a nearby creek bottom and shot. For years their bones were used as fertilizer.

Burying the human dead was agonizing. Pestilence loomed if corpses were not put quickly underground. So burial parties, heedless of smeared blood and brains, dragged bloated corpses hurriedly into shallow graves. Most of the slain were young men in their twenties. Poignantly, some had been found clutching photographs, letters, or Bibles, last remembrances of loved ones lost. Many were buried in vast anonymous trenches, far away from home. The covering of dirt was so thin that at night a strange phosphorescence emanated from the ground. For years locals avoided such places as haunted.

Intriguingly enough, one burial crew discovered the body of a young woman dressed in the uniform of a Confederate private. Doubtless she was rolled hurriedly into a mass grave alongside her male comrades. Her name and her story remain unknown to this day.

Then there were the 20,000 or 30,000 wounded men, overwhelming the town and surrounding countryside, spilling out of churches, houses, and barns. Heroic doctors and nurses labored day and night while piles of amputated limbs bred maggots in the sun. Nevertheless, another 3,000 men died within the first few weeks, and they, too, were hastily put in the ground...

Meanwhile, visitors began arriving, often women, often from hundreds of miles away, seeking among the skeletal remains exposed in partially-eroded graves their sons or lovers, hoping to bring them home. Sometimes they found them; sometimes they didn't, and left knowing they were still out there, somewhere...

Source:
http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/07/0714_030714_gettysburg_2

February Quiz: **BATTLE OF SHILOH** by Gary Moore

1. What distinguished Shiloh from the battles fought before it?
2. Who commanded the Confederate Army at Shiloh?
3. U. S. Grant commanded one of the Union Armies at Shiloh. How old was he, approximately, at that time?
4. Grant and his Confederate counterpart had one political problem in common before Shiloh. What was it?
5. What important rail crossing might Grant had captured before Shiloh had he been give a free hand by Halleck?
6. What was the name of Grant's army at Shiloh? What was the name of Johnston's army?
7. What famous future Union commander commanded the Fifth Division?
8. What famous future Confederate commander was in charge of Johnston's Second Corps?
9. What recent vice-president of the United States commanded a Confederate corps at Shiloh?
10. Name the first Union and Confederate units to trade shots at Shiloh?
11. What was the name of the mongrel mascot of the 6th Iowa Regiment at Shiloh?
12. On the first day of the battle, the Confederate Army was blessed with one advantage that, for them, would be rare in the war. What was it?
13. What were Johnston's famous words on the first day of the battle?
14. What Confederate regiment was fired upon by their own comrades and why?
15. What medical "first" occurred at Shiloh?
16. This area, held by Union commanders Hurlburt on the left and W.H.L. Wallace on the right, was the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting in the battle. What was this position nicknamed by the Confederates?
17. What tactic did Bragg use in trying to take this position?
18. Where, physically, did Johnston suffer his fatal wound?
19. What Union division suffered the highest casualties from the battle?
20. What Union army joined Grant in the battle and who commanded it?

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT - LOOKING AHEAD

FUTURE PROGRAMS

MARCH: "Scandals of the Civil War"

APRIL: "Stereoscopic Civil War Photography"

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Kyra Hubis, Jennifer Vermillion, and Marilyn Comstock

Ron Perisho

January Quiz answers by John Herberich

1. Who was the Secretary of War in Franklin Pierce's Administration whose 'tendencies to appoint officers from among his Southern favorites' was to have serious consequences for the Federal Cavalry at the outbreak of the Civil War? **Jefferson Davis**
2. How many Federal cavalry regiments were there at the beginning of the Civil War? **Five The sixth was added in May, 1861**
3. There were originally 10 companies in each cavalry regiment, designated with the letters A - K. Which letter was not used and why? **J: in the written script of the day, I & J were easily confused.**
4. What were the distinguishing colors and insignia of the Regular cavalry regiments? **Yellow striped pants and striping, crossed sabers**
5. Prior to the outbreak of war, in what cavalry regiment did Robert E. Lee serve and what famous Major General in the Union Army was under his command at that time? **The 2nd Cavalry / George H. Thomas**
6. From what Union command did Robert E. Lee resign to return to his home state of Virginia? **Commanding the 1st (now 4th) Cavalry**
7. What famous cavalry officer resigned from the 1st (now 4th) U. S. Cavalry to lead the Confederate Cavalry? **J. E. B. Stuart**
8. Who was the first Union General to be killed in combat and in what battle? **Nathaniel Lyon - The Battle of Wilson Creek, Springfield, MO, Aug. 10, 1861**
9. What major surrender of Union infantry at the beginning of the war so stunned the army that the unit was denied its regimental colors until it had proven itself at Fredericksburg in 1863? **July, 1861, New Mexico. 7th Infantry, U.S.A.**
10. After what battle did a "little known (Union) brigadier general" make his name by demanding: "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted."? **Fort Donelson, 12-16 February 1862/U. S. Grant**
11. Furious at the thought of the surrender of Fort Donelson, what famous Confederate officer managed to slip through Union lines and save his reputation and his troops? **Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest**
12. What Union officer, who had served with the 4th Cavalry Regiment prior to the war, was designated as the first U. S. Army Chief of Cavalry in November of 1862? **David S. Stanley**
13. The "first great cavalry combat of the war at Brandy Station, June 9, 1863, brought into prominence one of the Union's most controversial cavalymen. Who was he and what was his nickname? **Hugh Judson Kilpatrick / 'till Cavalry'**
14. At the Battle of Chickamauga, September 19-21, 1863, Rosecrans made a fatal blunder which eventually cost him his command. A complete Union rout was stopped by what Union general and his cavalry, earning him the sobriquet, "The Rock of Chickamauga"? **Major General George H. Thomas**
15. What Union General learning from Nathan Bedford Forrest, envisioned the use of the cavalry as "dismounted troops with rapid-fire carbines" overpowering enemy forces, then mounting to "pursue relentlessly as no other army had done in the war"? **General Thomas**
16. According to Historian Thomas Buell, under whose command did The Army of the Cumberland become "the most modern army of the Civil War, so advanced was it in technology and organization"? **General Thomas**
17. After what battle in 1864 could it be said: "The power of the cavalry as a striking force had shifted from the South to the North, from J.E.B. Stuart to Phil Sheridan."? **Battle of Yellow Tavern - J. E. B. Stuart mortally wounded**
18. What were the circumstances that led to the first uses of the Union Cavalry in trench warfare? **Grant's siege of Atlanta, August 2 - 14, 1864, 4th U. S. Cavalry**

(Continued next page)

19. What was perhaps the most famous, if insignificant, Union cavalry raid of the Civil War, comprising 4500 men, "more men, more firepower, and more formidable than any mounted column Sherman had ever assembled"? **Kilpatricks Raid around Atlanta, Aug. 18- 21, 1864**

20. In October 1864, all the cavalry forces in the Western Theater are combined under the command of a 27 year-old Brevet Major General. Who was he? **James H. Wilson**

21. During what Western Theater campaign in 1864 was Lieutenant Joseph Hedges the first member of the 4th Regiment United States Cavalry to be awarded the newly created Medal of Honor? **Dec. 17, 1864, West Harpeth River in pursuit of Hood**

22. During what battle on April 2, 1865, did the Fourth Cavalry Regiment "become the only regiment, during the war between the states, to defeat superior cavalry, large masses of artillery, and entrenched infantry"? **Selma, Alabama, April 2, 1865**

23. This final campaign in the Western Theater has been described as "one of the most remarkable cavalry operations of the war, for, as we have said, it was not a mere raid or dash, but an invading army determined to fight its way through.... It is certainly one of the most extraordinary affairs in the history of the cavalry service...". Name the campaign and the Commanding General. **Selma Campaign | General James H. Wilson**

24. Who was the first (flamboyant) "horse soldier in blue who dashed forward under a truce flag to demand immediate and unconditional surrender" from General Robert E. Lee? **George A, Custer**

Bob Krauth
3940 Tuess Road
San Jose, Ca 95121

