

# THE CHARGER

February, 2008

448th Meeting

Vol. 29 #6

*Tonight's Program:*

## A Civil War Quiz

Was it Don Carlos Buell or Don George Pardo who saved Grant and Sherman at Shiloh? Did Jefferson Davis really say "What me worry?" If you know the answers to these and other simple questions about the Civil War, then this quiz and the fine prizes that attend it are literally for you! In a combined "Power of 10" and "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" format, Quizmaster Brian and his ravishing assistant, Peter, will amuse and amaze you by death-defying feats of inquisition and multiple choice answers. With questions worth from \$1 up to \$1,000,000 (confederate), with life-lines, with real prizes from the lowest to the highest, with everyone guaranteed to win something, be prepared to stand up and then sit down again to be



tested by such scintillating questions as: "How many soldiers died at First Bull Run and what were their names?" (No, wait – that's a Dan Zeiser question – ours are not that bad!). Among the grand prizes, if anyone makes it that far, is the three-volume First Edition of "Lee's Lieutenants, A Study In Command" by Douglas Southall Freeman autographed by the author. The evening will be fun and yet incomplete without the active participation of the members of this Roundtable. Don't be shy! Be there!

*Tonight's Speaker:*

## Brian Kowell

Brian has been a student of the Civil War since conception. A tennis major in college, the Roundtable has been unable to prevent him from continuing to indulge his fondness for Judson Kilpatrick. Over the years, Mr. Kowell has contributed many articles to The Charger and has made presentations to the Roundtable on several occasions. He is known for his half-vast knowledge of Civil War horses and those who rode them. Mr. Kowell has been a member of the Roundtable since 1975, is a past president, and was editor of the Charger for many years. Brian is married and has five children.

**Date: Wednesday,  
February 13, 2008**

**Place: The Cleveland  
Playhouse Club  
8501 Carnegie Ave.**

**Time: Drinks 6 PM  
Dinner 7 PM**

**Reservations: Please Call  
JAC Communications  
(216) 861-5588**

**Meal choice: Grilled Texas Sir  
loin or Cremini Ravioli**

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

*President:* **Terry Koozer** (216) 226-7527  
*Vice President:* **Jon Thompson** (440) 871-6439  
*Secretary:* **Lisa Kempfer** (440) 526-1318  
*Treasurer:* **Dennis Keating** (216) 397-0188  
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### Directors:

Dave Carrino                      John Fazio  
Marilyn DeBaltzo                Rick Maurer  
Phil DiBianca                      Marge Wilson

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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

### Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Past Presidents

2007 John Fazio	1981 Thomas Geschke
2006 Dave Carrino	1980 Charles Spiegle
2005 Mel Maurer	1979 William Bates
2004 Warren McClelland	1978 Richard McCrae
2003 Maynard Bauer	1977 James Chapman
2002 Bill McGrath	1976 Milton Holmes
2001 William Vodrey	1975 Thomas Gretter
2000 Bob Boyda	1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1999 Dick Crews	1973 Arthur Jordan
1998 John Moore	1972 Bernard Drews
1997 Dan Zeiser	1971 Kenneth Callahan
1996 John Sutula	1970 Frank Schuhle
1995 Norton London	1969 Donald Heckaman
1994 Robert Battisti	1968 Frank Moran
1993 Kevin Callahan	1967 William Schlesinger
1992 Bob Baucher	1966 Donald Hamill
1991 Joe Tirpak	1965 Lester Swift
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.	1964 Guy DiCarlo, Jr.
1989 Neil Glaser	1963 Paul Guenther
1988 Martin Graham	1962 Edward Downer
1987 George Vourlojianis	1961 Charles Clarke
1986 Tim Beatty	1960 Howard Preston
1985 Brian Kowell	1959 John Cullen, Jr.
1984 Neil Evans	1958 George Farr, Jr.
1983 William Victory	1957 Kenneth Grant
1982 John Harkness	

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### FEBRUARY, 2008

The Annual Dick Crews Debate with the question: The Southern Victory of 1865: Was the Confederacy a Viable State? Hans Kuenzi, Thomas Stratton-Crooke and Paul Burkholder argued for and Judge C. Ellen Connally and Peter Holman against the proposition.

Ellen contended that the Confederacy was plagued by failures of leadership beginning with Jefferson Davis, who never overcame the resentment of the yeoman farmer against the planter class. She also asserted that the C.S.A. had an internal contradiction in that it was attempting to form a strong national government with states that believed in states' rights. Peter argued the Confederacy could not survive regardless of battlefield victories because it rested on slavery and agriculture, which could not support a modern state.

Paul submitted that the C.S.A. had its greatest chance for victory in the fall of 1862, when Lee invaded Maryland and Bragg Kentucky. Had Lee's orders at Antietam not been lost, Britain would have recognized the C.S.A., which, considering its economic strength, would have been viable. Hans asserted that the Confederacy was a strong nation with a strong economy, one that needed no real capital improvements. Hans's map of America, with the negotiated border following the C.S.A. victory, showed the C.S.A. to include Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Mexico. This would have given the new C.S.A. access to the Oklahoma and Texas oil fields that could sustain a new nation. Thomas claimed that the C.S.A. was viable, born in the tradition of 1776, and that the shot fired at Ft. Sumter was the second shot "heard around the world."

Peter Holman was voted the best debater and won a host of valuable prizes. I want to thank the debaters for stepping up and taking part in the Annual Debate.

This brings us to the February meeting where Brian Kowell will conduct a Civil War Quiz based on the TV show "So You Want to be a Millionaire." So, consider stepping up as contestant and winning valuable prizes and great glory.

Sincerely, Terry Koozer

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE  
2007/2008 SCHEDULE**

September 12, 2007

**The Lincoln-Douglas Debates:  
A Reenactment**



**George  
Buss**

October 10, 2007

**Brevet Brigadier General James B.  
Barnett of the 1st Cleveland Light Ar-  
tillery and the Firing of the First Land  
Cannon Shots of the War**

**Marge Wilson**

November 14, 20067

**George Thomas at  
the Battle of  
Chickamauga**

**Dan Zeiser**



December 12, 2007



**Nathan Bedford  
Forrest:  
Napoleonic  
Cavalryman**

**Greg Biggs**

January 9, 2008

**The Dick Crews Annual  
Debate**

*The Southern Victory of 1865:  
Was the Confederacy a Viable  
State?*

**Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

February 13, 2008

**A Civil War Quiz**

**Presented by  
Brian Kowell**



March 12, 2008

**Raid!: The Confed-  
eracy Comes to St.  
Albans, Vermont**



**William F. B. Vodrey**

April 9, 2008

**The USS Kear-  
sarge vs. the  
CSS Alabama  
John Fazio**



May 14, 2008



**Jesse James: The  
Last Rebel**

**Mel Maurer**

## Decisive Battles of the Civil War? None

Greg Biggs, President Clarksville, Tennessee Civil War Roundtable

In my program "Napoleonic Cavalryman: Nathan Bedford Forrest" at the December meeting, I stated early on that the Civil War had no decisive battles despite Civil War historians constantly writing that this or that battle was "decisive." I also stated that most Civil War historians do not study warfare prior to the Civil War, most importantly the Napoleonic Wars, when decisive battles were fought. Lastly, I argued that the primary reason for the lack of decisive battles in the Civil War was the misuse of cavalry, particularly in the pursuit phase, which rarely existed after a typical Civil War engagement.

Let me reiterate what a "decisive battle" was in Napoleonic terms. This was a battle that brought about a political solution to the war with one side withdrawing or surrendering to the side that won the battle. Some Napoleonic examples include Austerlitz (1805), where Napoleon's victory forced Austria out of the war. In 1806 there was Jena-Auerstadt and the 250 mile aggressive pursuit of the Prussians that ultimately knocked them out of the war. In 1807, Friedland defeated Czar Alexander and the Russians and, of course, in 1815, the Allied victory at Waterloo sealed Napoleon's own fate. Under this definition, no Civil War battle comes close.

To be sure, there were a few battles where one army or the other was severely beaten and, in a couple cases, that army was very nearly destroyed. Richmond, Kentucky in 1862 where the Union forces were virtually annihilated is one, but the war still went on. In 1863, the Confederate Army of Tennessee barely got off Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga and even lost most of its artillery, and yet by May, 1864 that army had been rebuilt to its largest and most effective state of the war. Confederate cavalry mattered in the first example and Union cavalry did not factor at all with the second.

We get a bit closer with the Battle of Nashville, where that same Confederate army was smashed in two days of fighting with only a few thousand survivors getting back to Alabama. Third Winchester and Cedar Creek in the 1864 Valley campaign also come close. The Confederates received the charge of five Union cavalry brigades at Winchester and, at the latter, Sheridan rallied his beaten troops and seized victory from the jaws of defeat while allowing his cavalry to envelope the Confederate left. Saylor's Creek, where Lee lost a third of his army in 1865, was also a crushing blow. What ties these battles together is that the critical arm of service for these victories was the Union cavalry, massed, aggressive, and properly led. But still there was no Confederate surrender; no immediate political solution after any of these battles.

Some historians argue that Civil War armies were just impossible to destroy and thus made campaigns more important than single battles. Using that as a basis with the South being defeated in the Vicksburg Campaign and the Atlanta Campaign, arguably the two most devastating blows to the South, why did they still not surrender? The former cut them in two and the latter lead directly to Lincoln's re-election, which certainly defeated the peace Democrats once and for all and made a negotiated settlement a moot point.

It is outside the scope of this article to discuss any deeper reason why Civil War armies were so hard to destroy (I argue that lack of proper cavalry usage is one critical reason), but this begs the question: were there ever any truly decisive battles in North America? Yes there were.

Quebec - September, 1759 - the French & Indian War/Seven Years' War. The political stakes: to see if Canada and the American colonies would be French or British. For five years the war had not been going in Britain's favor. Bad generalship, bad luck, and other factors allowed the French to fight their traditional foes to a standstill and even gain the upper hand. In 1757, French General Montcalm's advance up the Hudson River forced the British to surrender at Ft. William Henry (as depicted in the movie "The Last of the Mohicans"), thus threatening the British capitol at

Albany. In 1758, the British three-pronged counter-offensive was only partially successful, but it brought notice of a new British general, James Wolfe.

In June, 1759, Wolfe sailed a British army of 9,000 up the St. Lawrence River to attack Quebec, held by Montcalm and his 14,000 troops. After a repulse and some feints, Wolfe was able to maneuver his troops onto the heights south of the city, forcing the French to come out and fight a set-piece battle. British discipline and massed fire shredded the French army and mortally wounded Montcalm. Though Wolfe was also mortally wounded, his victorious troops pursued the French, forcing the remnants back into the city. The new French commander withdrew from Quebec and the city surrendered a few days later. The war would largely conclude in 1760 with the capture of Montreal by the British, although smaller engagements would continue for three more years. The result: the British victory at Quebec defeated the largest French army on the North American continent as well as killed their best general. The British also lost arguably their finest general of the war, but it was all downhill from Quebec until 1763. Canada and the American colonies would be English from here on out and we speak English today because of this.



The death of General Wolfe

New Orleans - January, 1815 - the War of 1812 (actually very much a part of the Napoleonic Wars, arguably the real Second World War, the Seven Years' War being the first world conflict). The stakes: who would really control America - the British or the Americans. In December, 1776, Thomas Paine wrote the famous phrase, "these are the times that try men's souls." This same phrase could well have been written in 1814. By this time, the British had chased the brilliantly led US Navy from the seas, captured and burned Washington City, and defeated several American armies, which had few good commanders to lead them. The war was increasingly unpopular with New England even threatening secession. Despite the negotiations going on in Ghent to settle the differences, the British formulated a crushing campaign to end it all and truly command America. The objective was to seize New Orleans and from there control commerce on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. That the British refused to recognize the Louisiana Purchase also fueled its determination; the seizure of this massive territory was another objective.

Hoping to stop them was General Andrew Jackson, one of the very few solid commanders and about the only American with a winning record to date. Taking command at New Orleans, he led a hodgepodge army of US regulars, Tennessee, Kentucky, and local militia (including two battalions of free blacks), Indians, and even Baratarian pirates. Facing them was a largely veteran British army under General Packenham, many of whose troops had faced Napoleon in Spain. On January 8, 1815, the British, after some days of raids and counter-punches by both sides, waged an all-out assault on Line Jackson. Here the cream of the British army was slaughtered, including Packenham, by Jackson's well-sited artillery and massed musket fire. What remained withdrew and planned a campaign against Mobile until word arrived that the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, had been signed in late December, 1814.



Gen. Andrew Jackson

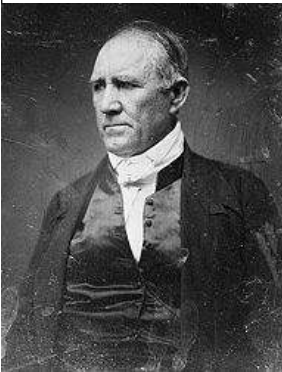
The result: although it has been argued that the treaty made New Orleans a moot point, historian Robin Reilly argues, I think correctly, that,

had Jackson been defeated, the British would have taken the city and prosecuted the war up the Mississippi River, completely cutting off all American commerce in the hinterlands of the fledgling nation. They then would have dictated new peace terms from the point of their sword, terms that would have undoubtedly been very unfavorable to America. The British defeat secured America completely and the Louisiana Purchase was finally recognized.

Battle of San Jacinto, Texas - April, 1836 - Texas War of Independence. The stakes: possible Texian independence from Mexico. Although an official declaration of independence from Mexico was not forthcoming until March 2, 1836, the war to separate Texas from Mexico was already in full swing. Mexican president General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna led a veteran army modeled very much along the



Antonio de Padua Maria Severino Lopez de Santa Anna y Perez



Sam Houston

lines of Napoleon's Grande Armee, its commander the self-titled "Napoleon of the west." Texian forces were slow to react and, with much political bickering hindering their cause, largely

ineffective to date. This allowed Santa Anna to invade the Mexican state and attack small forces of Texian troops at will. While General Sam Houston struggled to form and drill a large army of liberation, it was these small forces that had to buy the time necessary, including three critical commands, one at Refugio, another at Goliad, and the last at the San Antonio de Bejar. The Refugio and Goliad forces did not obey orders to concentrate with Houston quickly enough and a portion of Santa Anna's army gobbled them up. Most of the Mexican army then joined to reduce the fortifications at San Antonio de Bejar, known as the Alamo, and in a final assault on March 6, 1836 the defenders were overwhelmed.

Houston, after getting this news, retreated and tried to train his army on the march. Santa Anna pursued in several columns across Texas scattering small Texas forces and panicking civilians. Finally, at San Jacinto, Houston chose his ground for battle. Santa Anna had outrun a large part of his divided army and camped in a poor position with his back to a large bayou. Houston, seizing the moment, attacked and literally drove the Mexican command into the river, capturing Santa Anna. With threats of being hung abounding, the Mexican president ceded Texas to the Texians and a new republic was born. Though border battles with Mexico in the early 1840s would keep things warm in the region, Texas would remain a sovereign nation until 1845 when it joined the United States. The result: the annexation of Texas would open the huge southwest to outside settlement and lead directly to another war, this time between Mexico and the United States. The Mexican defeat gave America the largest new territory since the Louisiana Purchase, with the Pacific Ocean becoming the western boundary. From this came the states of New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah and Colorado. It all began with the victory at San Jacinto.

I hope that the term "decisive battle" can now be fully understood as these three North American examples show. The decisive battle was a linchpin of the Western way of war since it had been invented by the ancient Greeks. With most Greeks being militia, the idea was to fight a battle that would decide the war and then get back to farming, trading, etc. Every Westernized culture since has sought decisive battle in war. It would more often than not elude some of the finest commanders of history.

## General of the Month

Don Carlos Buell was born near Marietta, Ohio, on March 23, 1818. He graduated from West Point in 1841 and, as a company officer of infantry, took part in the Seminole War of 1841-42. He fought in the Mexican War, during which he was present at almost all the battles fought by Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott, winning the brevet of captain at Monterey and that of major at Contreras-Churubusco, where he was wounded. From 1848 to 1861 he performed various staff duties, chiefly as assistant adjutant general.

On the outbreak of the Civil War, he was appointed lieutenant colonel on May 11, 1861, brigadier general of volunteers a few days later, and major general of volunteers in March of 1862. He aided efficiently in organizing the Army of the Potomac, and, at the instance of General George B. McClellan, in November of 1861 was sent to Kentucky to succeed General William T. Sherman in command. Here he employed himself in the organization and training of the Army of the Ohio (subsequently of the Cumberland), which to the end of its career retained a standard of discipline and efficiency only surpassed by that of the Army of the Potomac. In the spring of 1862, Buell followed the retiring Confederates under Albert Sidney Johnston and appeared on the field of Shiloh at the end of the first day's fighting. On the following day, aided by Buell's fresh and well-trained army, Ulysses S. Grant carried all before him.

Buell subsequently served under Henry W. Halleck in the advance on Corinth, and in the autumn commanded in the campaign in Kentucky against Braxton Bragg. After a period of maneuvering in which Buell scarcely held his own, this virtually ended in the indecisive battle of Perryville. The alleged tardiness of his pursuit, and his objection to a plan of campaign ordered by the Washington authorities, brought about Buell's removal from command. With all his gifts as an organizer and disciplinarian, he was haughty in his dealings with the civil authorities and, in high command, he showed, on the whole, unnecessary tardiness of movement and an utter disregard for the requirements of the political situation. Moreover, as McClellan's friend, holding similar views, adverse politically to the administration, he suffered by McClellan's displacement. The complaints made against him were investigated in 1862-63, but the result of the investigation was not published. Subsequently he was offered military employment, which he declined. He resigned his volunteer commission in May, and his regular commission in June of 1864.

After the war, he was president of Green River Iron Company (1865-70) and subsequently engaged in various mining enterprises. He also served (1885-89) as pension agent at Louisville. He died at his home near Rockport, Kentucky on November 19, 1898. He is buried in St. Louis, Missouri.



### **Ed Bearss in Ohio!**

Ed Bearss will be speaking at the Gaslight Theater, corner of Main and State Streets in Georgetown, at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 16, 2008, on: THE OVERLAND CAMPAIGN. Tickets are \$10.00 at the Thompson House Gallery, 303 E. Grant Ave., Georgetown, Ohio 45121. Tel: 937-378-4222.

The U.S. Grant Homestead and the Grant Schoolhouse, both located in Georgetown, will also be open for tours from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM on February 16<sup>th</sup>. A fee of \$3.00 per person will admit you to both sites.

### **The Charger is going to email.**

As a cost saving measure, the Charger will be converting to email. Most of the members have email and many have stated a preference for electronic delivery. However, as Editor, I know there are some who do not have email or prefer to receive a copy through the mail. The Roundtable will continue to do so for those folks. Please let me know, either at one of the meetings or by calling me at 440-449-1391 that you want it mailed. The deadline is April 1. Thank you.

**NEXT MONTH**

## **RAID!: THE CONFEDERACY COMES TO ST. ALBANS, VERMONT**

**WILLIAM VODREY**