

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

JULY 1984

MID SUMMER EXTRA

Number 6

1984 FIELD TRIP SEPT. 27-30

Traveling in car pools, field trippers will rendezvous on Thursday evening, September 27, at the Best Western Kywood Motel, in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Double room - \$32.00

A hospitality suite will be in operation all three nights.

On Friday, September 28, a tour of the Chancellorsville battlefield will be under the guidance of Robert Krick, Chief Historian of the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park. This is a fine opportunity to study the battle in detail.

Saturday, September 29th, will be devoted to the 1862 and 1863 Battles of Fredericksburg, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. That evening the speaker will be John E. Devine, who will present his talk "Prelude to Gettysburg."

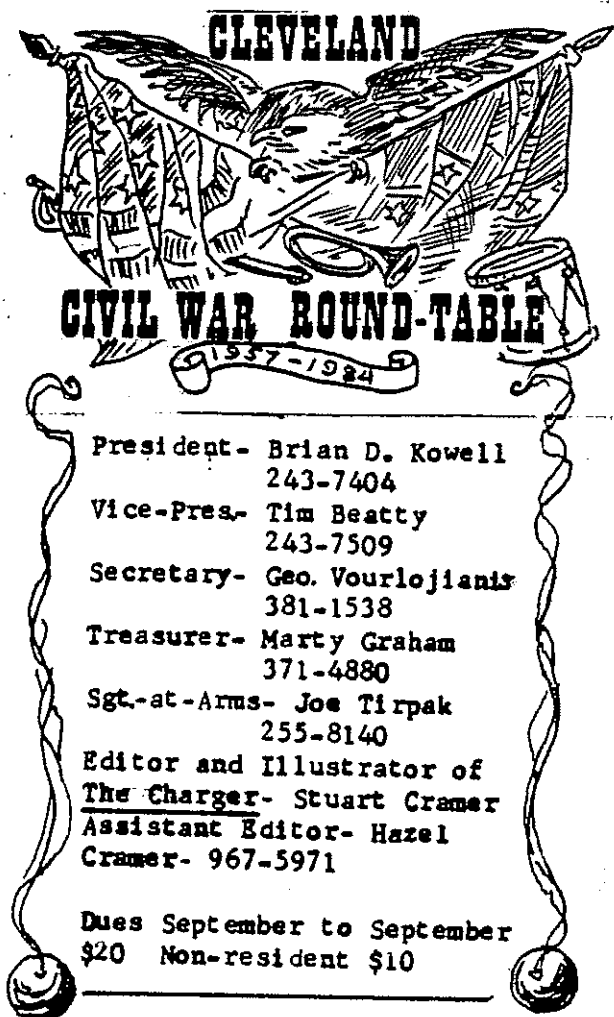
A deposit of \$25.00 is required by August 15th. Part of this will be applied against your motel bill. Send your check to:

Marty Graham
1927 Revere Road
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
Phone: 371-0260

When you send in your deposit you will receive an information-orientation packet. Remember, August 15th is the deadline.

Bill Kostic and Marty Graham have spent a lot of time and effort lining up what should be an outstanding field trip.





President- Brian D. Kowell
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Secretary- Geo. Vourlojianis
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Sgt.-at-Arms- Joe Tirpak
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Editor and Illustrator of
The Charger- Stuart Cramer
Assistant Editor- Hazel
Cramer- 967-5971

Dues September to September
\$20 Non-resident \$10

EXECUTIVE MEETING

The official executive committee and the traditional club advisors held its annual meeting on June 12 at Keefer's Restaurant. A number of issues were hotly debated over pitchers of beer and plates of knockwurst.

One of the main purposes of the meeting was to smooth the transition of officers to their new positions and duties.

The post of committeeman left vacant by the death of Frank Gillen was filled by voting in John Collins for 1984-85. Tom Van Sickle, Ed Troxell and Tom Koehl are the other members.

A new roster is to be forthcoming as well as a copy of the club's Constitution for each member. Most important,

PROGRAMS FOR 1984-85

SEPTEMBER 11

Holiday Inn
Middleburg Heights
Speaker: ED BEARSS

OCTOBER 9

Home of Ken Callahan
Speaker: GERALD ALTOFF
Pickett's Charge: "You Are There"

NOVEMBER 13

The Hermit Club
Speaker: PROF. FRANK BYRNE
Letters of Corporal Marcus Spiegel

DECEMBER 11

Gray's Armory
Speaker: DR. WILLIAM MAHONEY
"Gen. Turner Ashby"

JANUARY 8

The Hermit Club
Annual Book Sale and Quizz

FEBRUARY 12

The Hermit Club
Speaker: MARTIN GRAHAM
"Battle of Cross Keys and Port Republic"

MARCH 12

The Hermit Club
Speaker: BOB KRICK
"Battle of Cedar Mountain"

APRIL 9

The Hermit Club
Speaker: DENNIS FRYE
"Cowstails Mystery, Siege, and Capture of Harpers Ferry"

MAY 14

The Hermit Club
Ladies' Night.
Stuart Cramer - Farewell performance of "Now You See It" full magic show

after much soul-searching it was decided to maintain the present dues for another year. In-town members' dues will still be \$20, and Out-of-town members' \$10. The coming programs were presented and discussed; half of the speakers will be members, the other half from other parts of the country.

Ken Callahan has graciously offered to host the October meeting at his home in Shaker Heights. The Cleveland Grays' offer of their Armory was discussed and it was decided to have only our December meeting there. Ladies'

Robertson a Hit at Ladies' Night

Dr. James (Bud) Robertson, speaker at the May Ladies' Night, was his usual success. This Virginia gentleman with a twinkle in his eye was a hit, his talk witty, informative and very well received by all. He reviewed the Civil War and its resulting effects upon us today. In the question and answer period following his talk, his clever repartee was the cause of many laughs and enjoyed by members and guests. This meeting was held at the Cleveland Gray's Armory in downtown Cleveland.



Executive Meeting Continued

Night will be a treat with Stuart Cramer performing his regular magic act on the Hermit Club stage. Marty Graham reported on the Field Trip to Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville to be conducted by N.P.S. historian Bob Krick. Looks like a great trip.

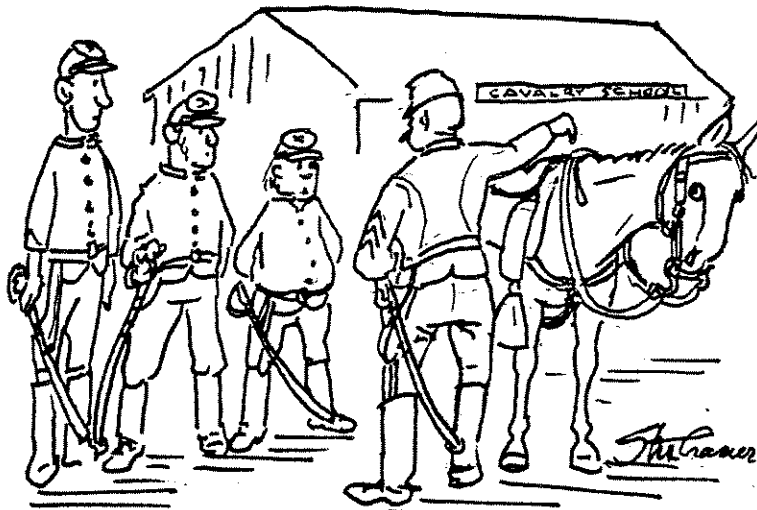
A special thanks to Jack Allison for his help last year collecting dinner and drink money (not an easy task). Jack decided not to move up the club's executive ladder but we appreciate his contributions. The annual quizz will be conducted by Tim Beatty and yours truly. Any member wishing to contribute questions please submit them in writing with answer and source to either of the above. If any member is interested in being on the panel, contact them.

Dues are being accepted NOW. Please mail your check to Marty Graham, Treasurer, Cleveland Civil War Round Table, P.O.Box 5786, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. Along with dues please send any change of address or telephone number to help George Vourlojianis update the roster.

Brian Kowell, President

* * * *

Civil War Smiles by STU CRAMER



"This, is a horse."

FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

Caputo, Philip, A Rumor of War. Rinehart & Winston, N.Y. 1977.

In the surfeit of books about Vietnam I hesitated to open this book when I read the author is a combat victim of that unhappy conflict, a willing participant in our only losing war. The poetic title, however, led me into the first pages, and then I was hooked. It became impossible to put the book down, for here is an account of combat that is different.

The author, fresh out of college, awash with patriotism and filled with youth's vague myths of manhood, became a Marine lieutenant. Even the literal horrors of Marine training did nothing to soften his high resolve. He went to Vietnam - to Danang, in fact - just before the American policy of offense went into effect. The deadening boredom of guard duty on the perimeter of the airfield gave way to the action of front line infantry. Caputo thought his quest for war's heroic experience was to be fulfilled.

He took part in no engagements of large bodies of troops contending for mastery over one another. It was very little as he imagined it would be. Instead it was an endless round of platoon size forays into an unforgiving jungle, rarely even seeing the enemy but always knowing he was there somewhere in the mud and dust and endless heat, just off there in the tortuous elephant grass, just beyond the next serpent-laden creek. But there was combat - quick fire fights, filled with fear, blood, death and indecision.

And there was also the strange and wonderful thing his platoon became: a band of brothers, an unidentified thing but very, very real. The greatest reality, Caputo found, was something he had not imagined: the thrill of war and, as he says, "the intoxication of combat." To his everlasting surprise he found a sense of unqualified bliss in combat. "Anyone who fought in Vietnam," he writes, "if he is honest with himself will have to admit he enjoyed the compelling attractiveness of combat."

Later, as a civilian in the anti-war movement, he says, "I would never be able to hate war with anything like the undiluted passion of my friends in the movement who had not been there."

This is the point that makes this superbly written book different. Despite its horrors, combat is uniquely compelling. Soldiers in all wars certainly have felt this, but who has written about it? You read about combat by soldiers in many wars but it is only in war novels do you ever read about the "exhilaration of combat." And then it is depicted almost as a character defect, a warped humanity. This soldier is different.

Caputo at last looked into the immoral face of not only his war but all wars and the ultimate futility of the actions of the man on the line with a gun. He tells of reading this from Kipling before he came to know real combat:

The end of the fight is a tombstone
white with the name of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear? "A Fool lies
here who tried to hustle the East."

Caputo realized he was in the legion of the suckered but is honest enough to remember truly how it was.

SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

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In the heat of July the great battles of Bull Run, Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Atlanta were fought. Just to take our minds off the sweat and sunburn of this month, let's take a look at a different kind of battle that took place during the winter of 1863-64 in a Confederate camp in Dalton, Georgia, where General Joseph E. Johnson's Army of Tennessee was in winter quarters.

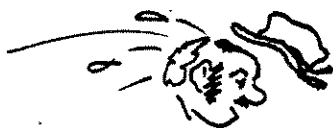
It had been zero temperature for several days - too cold to drill or play the usual out-of-door games and most of the idle young men were bored and restless. On one side of the camp were troops from Tennessee, on the other they were mostly from Georgia.

One night it came on to snow, and the snowfall blanketed the entire area, but the next day found warmer temperatures which made the snow just right for "packing" snowballs.

What started out as a small snowball fight suddenly grew to a big one, when some Tennesseans squared off to do battle with some Georgians. Soon the word spread, and hundreds, then thousands poured out of the huts to join the fray, which turned into an intra-state contest.

Snowballs were flying everywhere; charge after charge and countercharges raised cheers and curses. Colonels appeared on horseback, and at a fever pitch as long battle lines were formed, thousands of non-combatants assembled on the surrounding hills to witness the spectacle. As hundreds of snowballs filled the air, men stumbled and tripped over one another trying to dodge, while others were knocked over by direct hits. Officers, of course, were popular targets.

It is recorded that the Tennesseans finally chased their opponents right through their own camps and back into the woods until the general officers called a halt. The only casualties were a lot of black eyes and broken arms. It was a battle that remained in the memories of those southern boys who survived the real ones.



OLD "GIMLET EYE" BUTLER

Readers of this journal of Civil War miscellany may recall that its editor has a soft spot for old General Benjamin Franklin Butler, he of the sinister charisma with a different slant on things. He might have been President of the United States, you know, by simply having said yes...when Abraham Lincoln asked him to run as his vice-president in the 1864 election.

With a visage as doleful as a basset hound's, but with a brain as sharp as any legal beagle ever to come out of the State of Massachusetts, Ben Butler was one of the leading trial lawyers of the country before he switched to becoming a general. He scored the Union's first victories, and early on became the North's only hero. It didn't take him long, however, to begin rubbing everyone the wrong way and exercising his considerable talent for stirring up controversies.

While there was no kinship between the two, the subject of this piece, General Smedley Darlington Butler, was cut from the same cloth, and some similarities exist in the careers of these two American patriots. Smedley had only one career, which was military, while Ben's encompassed the law, manufacturing, military and mostly politics. Each one is remembered by a couple of nicknames: Ben as "Beast Butler" or "Spoons Butler," and Smedley as "Old Gimlet Eye" or "Duckboard Butler."



This writer's interest in Smedley Butler was sparked back in the mid-thirties when he attended a lecture by the then retired Major General of Marines. A mind's-eye picture of him stands out with cameolike clarity. A small man, wiry, with eyes of pure flint, a slash of a mouth, an eagle beak and-cocky. He told of his experiences as a Director of Safety when he was on loan to the City of Philadelphia from the Marine Corps. This latter day general was a genuine American hero.

Born into a quiet Quaker family in West Chester, Pa., Smedley ran away from home to join the army at the time of the sinking of the Maine and war fever was running high. But the elder Butler was not only a Quaker, but a State Representative, and the recruiting officers knew where he stood on the matter of war and armies and sent the boy home. Several days later he learned that an examination for Marine officers was to be held in Washington and he determined to try for it. He advised his father of his intentions, and the parent declared he would get in touch with the Capital and see

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that the examinations availed nothing.

"Father," said young Butler, "if thee does as thee says, I will run away and join the regular army."

The teenager went to Washington, passed the examinations 2nd out of 200 and was made a second lieutenant. He was immediately dispatched to Cuba, where he received field training at Guantanamo and Manzanillo just before the Spanish-American War ended. A couple of years later, now promoted to first lieutenant, Butler was sent to the Panji. Aguinaldo (there was another Mosby) had stirred up an insurrection in the Philippines. Butler saw some action there, learning to use the newly issued .45 caliber automatic that is in today's news; finally a peace of sorts was restored just about the time trouble flared in China.

The representatives of many foreign powers were beleaguered in the city of Peking, and a mixed expeditionary force was sent to their rescue. Butler was a member of the American contingent. In the battle of Tientsin during this Boxer Rebellion, the young lieutenant was wounded in the hip while lugging another wounded marine off the field. Discharged from the hospital later, he went back and picked up another wound in the other leg.



While it was 17 years before the United States became involved in another great war, Butler saw plenty of action and plenty of excitement. Promotions came at regular intervals, and he was frequently in the news. He had a dynamic personality, was intensely determined, and loved the Corps with its strict discipline and traditions. In the 1912 Nicaragua campaign he earned the nickname of "Old Gimlet Eye," because he seemed to be able to spot any infraction, anything wrong, and acquired feverish bloodshot eyes which enhanced his habitually penetrating and bellicose stare.

Teddy Roosevelt called him "the perfect American soldier," and when Coolidge was president, whenever trouble brewed, the loquacious Cal would say, "Send Butler." He was beloved by the marines, not only because of the color he added to the Corps, but for his soldierly qualities and his humane and understanding treatment of the men.

He had the rare distinction of having been awarded the Medal of Honor twice. In 1914 the U.S. was on the verge of war with Mexico and a good many battleships were anchored in the Vera Cruz harbor. An invasion was expected. Butler was sent into the interior to plot a good route to Mexico City and in this adventure earned the medal. (This writer has a vague recollection of reading about a future Civil War general performing the exact feat during the Mexican War??)

In 1915 the marines were sent into Haiti and Smedley D., of course, was in the thick of things. He made a brilliant charge and took Fort Riviere, reducing the Haitian stronghold. He stayed there and organized an efficient Haitian gendarmerie and became Military Governor, restoring order, completing vital public works and proving himself a capable

administrator. In 1917 he was awarded the second Medal of Honor. When W.W.I broke out, Butler, by then a Brigadier General, tried to get an assignment to active service in France and was finally sent to Pontanzen, near Brest, as commandant of the disembarkment camp. It was not the kind of duty he was hoping for, but he had plenty of problems, which he attacked with characteristic enthusiasm and determination. At one time he was responsible for 45,000 men, fighting disease, lack of supplies, but mostly mud. The way he got rid of the mud that had



hampered all disembarkment movement and the operation of the camp earned him his other nickname, "Old Duck Boards Butler."

To be continued in the September issue, with the account of Butler's experience in Philadelphia and the court martial.

OLLAPODRIDA

The New York Stock Exchange banned all trading in stocks and bonds issued by the Southern States on May 11, 1861. This applied to all securities issued by those states that had seceded from the Union.

* * *

Following the Civil War, a rash of lecturers broke out over the North, and for about ten years every angle of the late rebellion was discussed from the platform. Generals told how they had won the war. Lesser officers told how they told the generals how to win it. And even lowly privates were willing to divide the honor between "me and Grant."

Then followed a swarm of drummer boys. The northern ranks - and southern too - had been reinforced with youngsters, some barely ten or twelve years old, who matched their drums against the muskets of the regulars. Sooner or later they were picked up by the lyceum bureaus to become small town attractions in their own right. These men, now nearing middle age, had been in some of the more important engagements and so labeled themselves "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh," "The Drummer Boy of Gettysburg," "The Drummer Boy of Winchester," or whatever title took their fancy.

On the face of it there wasn't much entertainment in listening to the hell being beaten out of a snare drum by some corpulent mustached individual, though they brought along their original drum and told how they marched and beat until they dropped from exhaustion and were toted along on the back of a sympathetic soldier.

-Town Hall Tonight, by Harlowe R. Hoyt

* * *

Every company had its practical joker, and one of these belonged to Co. D, 51st Alabama Cavalry, Jim —. The boys had torn down some old houses and killed a large number of rats. Jim selected several of the largest and fattest ones, skinned and carefully dressed them and wrapped them in corn-shucks, and carried them with him back to the picket line.

Taking Lieutenant B, (not a very popular officer) to one side, he whispered, "Lieutenant, I've got some nice young squirrels, and if you will let me go back over the hill and kindle a fire, I can cook them and you and I can have a feast. Don't say anything to the others."

Now, it was against orders to have fire near a picket-post, but fresh meat being mighty scarce permission was given. In half of a canteen Jim fried the "squirrels" and in due time the feast was secretly had. Next day the lieutenant was greeted with yells, "Rats, Rats, Rats!" and it soon dawned on him what he'd et.

-Campaigns of Wheeler and His Cavalry

* * *

On his way to Washington, D.C. as President-Elect, Abraham Lincoln was accompanied by an entourage consisting of his wife and three small sons, a group of state representatives, Ward Hill Lamon, his friend and self-appointed body guard, relatives by marriage, secretaries, newspaper correspondents and a military escort of four army officers appointed by the War Department. These were Major, later General David Hunt (even then with a dyed mustache and dark brown wig,) Captain, later General John Pope, Colonel, later General Edwin V. Sumner, and Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, first Union man killed in the War.

