



# The Charger

## CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

NOVEMBER 1985

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 6

246th Meeting

DATE: November 12th  
PLACE: The Hermit Club  
SPEAKER: Dr. Ken Callahan  
SUBJECT: The Western Front; World War I  
TIME: Canteen 6:00 P.M. Chow 7:00 P.M.

## All Quiet On The Western Front



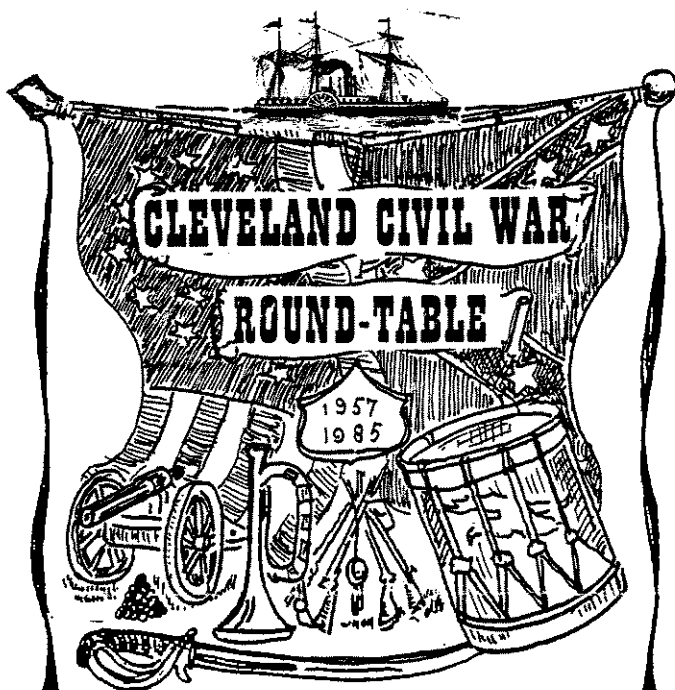
Dr. Ken Callahan will speak to us about a conflict that was once referred to as the Great War, but one that Ken and others regard as almost a forgotten conflict. In his talk Ken will explain why he feels that 1914 is the watershed of 20th Century history.

Ken is uniquely prepared to make a presentation on the First World War as he has had four opportunities in the past four years to visit France and has toured most of the battlefields on the western front. In the course of his program Ken will focus on such battles as the Somme, Verdun, Ypres, and Soissons, all actions which occurred before the American entry into the war. Many different aspects of the war will be included, such as the role played by topography, tactics, the sequence of action and humor from the period.

Ken Callahan is personally involved in trying to unravel one of the unsolved mysteries of the war. Make plans to attend this meeting and learn of his efforts to locate 3,000 Australian troops who were entombed in full battle regalia!

Pres. Tim Beatty

# October Meeting



1985 - 1986

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216-967-5971.

Dues \$20 September  
to September. Non-  
resident - \$10.00

## Apologies to Bill Van Aken

In both the September and October issues we goofed by naming the speaker Thomas instead of Bill Van Aken. Our undercover reporter had us thinking they were two different people! Sorry, member Bill Van Aken.

**RESERVATIONS A MUST  
CALL TIM BEATTY AT 243-7509**

This was the third year that member Ken Callahan hosted a club meeting at his beautiful home. Those attending were greeted at the door by two fiddlers under a giant Confederate flag and then proceeded down to the recreation room where a professional bartender served the potables.

Our speaker was Dr. David Skagg, of Bowling Green University, who, that same morning, had been at the White House at a reception for Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

His talk on the 20th Maine at Little Round Top was very good, but somewhat marred by trouble with the slide projection. It was odd for the audience to sit with its back to the speaker and face a blank or half-black screen. (Editor's Note: If I were Dictator I would ban ALL slide projectors from ALL talks, speeches and lectures. How often one has to sit and stare at the same mug or picture for what seems like hours, or endure slides going back and forth while the operator looks for the right one...or maps that go in and out of focus and are too detailed to read anyway!! The only saving grace is that when the lights go out you can go to sleep.)

In spite of the interruptions the talk was interesting and informative. It was obvious that the speaker knew his Battle of Gettysburg, and offered several thought-provoking points. For instance, that the importance of Little Round Top<sup>was</sup> brought about by many decisions made by generals on both sides... that after the repulse Little Round Top was no longer important, and the battle moved on to other sections.... that Sickles' surprise and unauthorized move actually upset Robert E. Lee's plans...and the part played by a small company of Union sharpshooters volleying into the Confederate flank made them think they were being flanked by a whole regiment (oh, those repeater rifles)....and then during the question and answer period Prof. Skagg stated that he found it difficult to make a great general out of Lee at Gettysburg.

# Fred Gill's Book Review

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ABOUT A BRIDGE NOT TOO FAR

Ambrose, Stephen E. Pegasus Bridge,  
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.

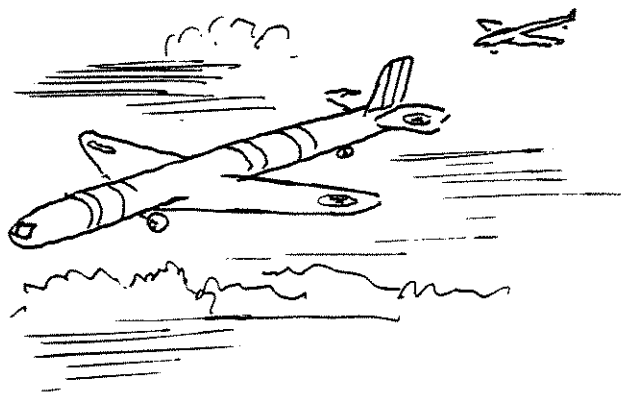
Accounts of battles and campaigns, no matter how well-researched and documented, are, by the imperative of historical writing, bound to be objective and informative. But they are different to the harsh reality of combat. It is only in the subjective accounts of small unit actions that the marvels of human spirit are evoked.

Many of these small unit actions are written about. Remember the 20th Maine at Little Round Top, Major Whittlesey and the Lost Battalion of World War I, Captain Abe Beam's astonishing foray behind German lines (Reviewed in the Charger for January, 1982) and that company of Army Engineers at the Battle of the Bulge in World War II? Here is an account of another of these small unit actions brought to life by the underlining of flesh and blood, brains and courage, and devotion to duty.

This is the story of one day in the life of one company of British soldiers. It is the story of Major John Howard and D Company of the 2nd Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. This company was carefully selected for one job for which they were trained in great secrecy for two years. Only Major Howard and his executive officer were told exactly what the job was, and it is a tribute to Howard's leadership that the frustrations of the two-year training period did not dull the spirit of the company or soften their resolution to do their individual jobs when the day came.

The purpose of these strange preparations was simple, but upon the success of the mission depended the initial success or failure of the British landing on the coast of Normandy. D Company, jammed in those

troop-carrying towed gliders, were to land in a triangular field of about fifteen hundred feet and secure a bridge across the Caen Canal before the Germans could blow it. It was across this bridge that the armies on the beaches would have a quick way into the Orne valley.



The time came and a few minutes after D-Day started those intrepid glider pilots deposited D Company and all its gear on that insignificant piece of ground. The first Allied unit of that day went into immediate action. It must have been a dicey thing, that landing, and Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory wrote later that John Wallwork, the chief glider pilot, accomplished "...the greatest feat of flying in World War II."

Before that day was out the 6th Airborne Division was to drop and take over from D Company after they secured the vital bridge. But this paratroop division became scattered over the landscape, disorganized and nowhere near the then-called Benouville Bridge - now officially called Pegasus Bridge after the code name of the operation. Major Howard had no choice but to hang on. And hang on he did, with help from German command bumbles but mainly because that interminable training paid off. The brains and devotion of his hardy band paid incalculable dividends.

Before the remnants of the paratroopers arrived there occurred one of those incredible scenes that make legends. Lord Lovat's Commandos were to establish a link between D Company and the beaches. The story goes that when Major Howard was hard-pressed by the rallying Germans, who should appear out of the gathering mist but Lord Lovat, a sort of professional Scot, and his piper, piping, of course. Lord



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Lovat, clad in kilts, a green beret and white sweater and brandishing a walking stick started across the bridge, despite Howard's warning that a couple of German snipers across the canal had not been cleared out. Automatically Lovat's Commandos, wearing their berets, started to follow him across the bridge. The snipers promptly picked off a dozen of them; all shot through their berets. Helmets appeared forthwith.

This little scene, full of color and panache, would have been better played if milord had been a little less foolish and had ordered his men to put on their helmets, even if he did not want to. But then that's not the stuff legends are made of.

It does not make sense either that D Company, despite their spectacular success at Pegasus Bridge, was later absorbed back into the regiment. Think what they might have done at Remagen or at Arnhem. Who else knew better how to do it?

#### "LONG TOM"

Twice a weapon of the Confederate troops, twice a weapon for the Union, Long Tom, one of the longest and biggest guns used in the Civil War, has become an enduring legend of the Cumberland Gap.

Authentic details of the long, rifled cannon have been lost in the mists of time, but it was very real and important to those who fought and skirmished around the craggy knobs of the famous pass. Its artillerial exploits were chiefly to confound and terrorize bodies of enemy troops who dared to approach within five miles of the fortified pass. Its long muzzle pointed over a sheer precipice of 1500 feet above the valley below, and its firing range reached into the rolling hills of Powell Valley.

Long Tom was a confederate gun brought to the Gap soon after the passway was seized in September of 1861. It was believed to be one of four huge Whitworth rifled cannons made in England, purchased in that country by English friends of the Confederacy, and slipped through the blockade at Charleston, South Carolina early in the war. It was destined to be a valuable prize of war in the four year struggle.

In June of 1862, Union forces infested the Cumberland Gap and forced withdrawal of the Confederates. The heavy guns were spiked and Long Tom's gun crew plunged the artillery piece over the precipice to crash upon a ledge several hundred feet below.

Long Tom was too valuable a gun to remain idle. The Union commander detailed a hundred men and a dozen teams of mules to drag the gun around the face of the cliff and back up the mountain. The job was accomplished and the gun was then pointed at the Confederates.

However, Long Tom's service for the Yankees was soon to end. An army of Confederate troops invaded Kentucky in the fall of 1862, bypassing the Cumberland Gap and cutting off the Union Forces. To escape the situation, the Union forces decided to evacuate the Gap and retreat to Ohio. On the night of September 17, 1862 they blew up their fortifications, spiked their guns, and again plunged the huge cannon over the precipice. The Confederates moved into the area and discovered the gun lying in the situation as they had left it.

After the occupation by the Confederates, the Gap, and Long Tom were again returned to the hands of Union Troops. When final evacuation came after peace had been restored, Long Tom and a number of other guns were left upon the field. The big, long, rifled cannon became the principal attraction for visitors and returning soldiers of the old pass.

Thanks to Indianapolis CWRT Hardtack

# Scenes I'd Like To Have Seen



On Sherman's march through the Carolinas, the Union Army was encumbered by a large crowd of Negro refugees. General Slocum, who commanded Sherman's left wing, described a family of slaves who joined the column. "Mounted on a cow was the head of the family and safely stored behind him were numerous bags slung over the beast's back. Inside each bag was a Negro child. Nothing was visible of the cow but the head, feet and tail, all else being covered by the woolly heads and bright shining eyes of the little children. The cow not only provided transportation but rations as well."

Slocum, Sherman's March. Thanks Brian Kowell

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Wilson's Creek and other battlefields that have been set aside as National Military Parks are memorials to the thousands of Americans who struggled and bled and died for their country. Their dedication and pain, their valor and agony have sanctified, "hallowed" if you prefer, the ground. The parks commemorate these sacrifices made by our forebears as they worked to shape our nation. A visit to one is an eloquent reminder to all Americans of the price that has been paid for "the blessings of liberty." Viewed in this way it seems clear that these few, special places are not for picnics or frisbee tossing, for rock concerts, or even fun runs. All of these are fine, worthwhile activities, but just as they would not be held in church, a graveyard, the art museum, or the Senate's chambers, they should not be held on Wilson's Creek Battlefield. Surely there are other facilities available in the communities that surround these National Military Parks that can be used for these recreational activities.

# Thanksgiving Dinner Spoiled

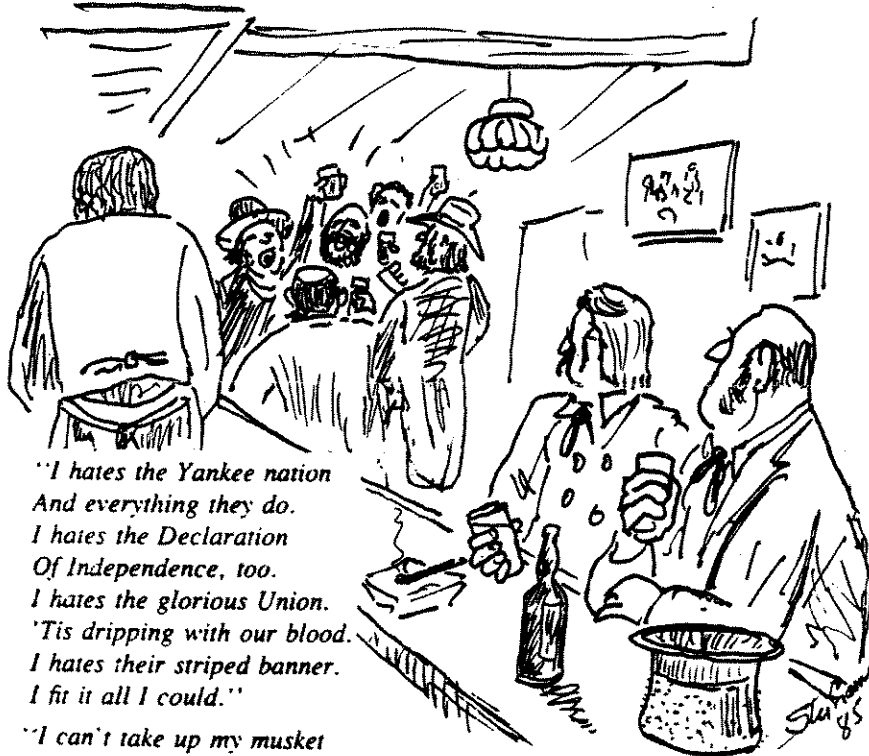
The Union and Confederate infantry lines were in some places only three hundred yards apart on the Mine Run battlefield in November, 1863. Midway in one such spot was a farmhouse and around it wandered a solitary turkey. One sharp-eyed Yankee skirmisher shot the bird and then ran forward to secure his dinner amid his comrades' cheers. As he stooped to pick up the turkey a Rebel skirmisher shot him dead and then ran forward to get the prize as his own side cheered. When he leaned over to pull the turkey from under the fallen Yankee, a shot from the Yankee line killed him and wild cheers from the Union ranks arose. There all three lay, one on top of the other...after that neither side wanting the turkey.



From The War Years With Jeb Stuart by W.W.Blackford.  
Thanks to Brian Kowell

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## Civil War Smiles by Stu Cramer



*"I hates the Yankee nation  
And everything they do.  
I hates the Declaration  
Of Independence, too.  
I hates the glorious Union.  
'Tis dripping with our blood.  
I hates their striped banner.  
I fit it all I could."*

*"I can't take up my musket  
And fight 'em now no more.  
But I ain't got to love 'em,  
Now that is sarten sure.  
And I don't want no pardon  
For what I was and am,  
I won't be reconstructed.  
And I don't care a damn!"*

"I don't blame 'em for  
drowning their sorrows,  
but do they have to keep  
on singin' that 'O I'm  
a Good Old Rebel?' "

Considering the hundreds of thousands of horses used during the Civil War, have you ever thought on the importance of the farriers who had to constantly shoe and reshoe all those animals times four? The mighty smithy was always an important and independent village mainstay, but hardly ever a wealthy one.

Today an expert farrier can make over \$100,000 a year. I like the true recent story of a blacksmith in Cortland, N.Y. who shod the five riding horses of a local wealthy woman who kept putting off paying him. Like many very rich she made a habit of forgetting her bills. So the smithy went out to her place and pulled off all 20 horse-shoes!

-Thanks reader  
Dr. H. Cramer,  
Cortland, N.Y.

# OLLAPODRIDA

During the siege of Yorktown, in April of 1862, Captain A.R. Wood, when posting his last picket for the evening, left him with the order: "Shoot the first man who approaches from the direction of the rebels without waiting to ask for the countersign." Captain Wood then promptly got lost, wandering from the lines, instead of into them, retraced his steps right back to the picket, and was, of course, promptly shot! The wound was mortal....he had given the orders for his own execution.

From The Civil War in Song and Story. Thanks to the  
CWRT of St. Louis' Bushwhacker.



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Remember Cliff Arquette, the lovable "Charley Weaver" of stage and TV....a real Civil War buff who realized a dream when he opened his American Museum of the Civil War in Gettysburg? He painted many of the military miniatures used in dioramas. Early in his career he had a dance band that competed with Sammy Kay - whose slogan "Swing and Sway With Sammy Kay" was countered by Cliff's "Swing and Sweat With Cliff Arquette."

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The principal players in the drama of the 1860's are long gone, but some of their progeny are still around.

Robert E. Lee IV, 60, is the divorced father of two (including R.E. Lee, V), and lives in McLean, Va. He is a vice-president of A. Smith Bowman Distillery, producers of an 80-proof bourbon called Virginia Gentleman.

Stonewall Jackson is survived by two great-grandsons. Thomas Jonathan Jackson Christian II, 33, and William Edmund Christian II, 35, are ministers. Bill preaches in Petersburg and Tom in Norfolk.

The name Sherman still raises the hackles of the South. John Sherman Hamlen, 51, is a fund-raiser for Harvard. He has two inherited swords and a letter from Lincoln on his parlor wall in Boston.

Jeff Davis' line has several descendants. Jefferson Hayes-Davis, 45, is a hotel consultant in San Francisco. His brother Bert is a geologist from Dallas who spends time raising money for a family museum and organizing biennial reunions at Rosemont in Woodville, Mississippi.

Thanks to the Harpers Ferry CWRT newsletter

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During the siege of Vicksburg, this menu was circulated in Richmond by unknown enemies of the administration

*Hotel de Vicksburg.*

Soup: mule tail

Roast: saddle of mule, *à l'armée*

Entrees: mule head, stuffed *à la Reb*;

mule beef, jerked *à la Yankie*

Pastry: cottonwood-berry pie, *à la ironclad*

Liquors: Mississippi water, vintage 1492, very superior

Any diners not satisfied with the starvation fare  
are welcome to apply to

JEFF DAVIS & CO., PROPRIETORS

At The Battle of Franklin Nov. 30, 1864, six Confederate generals were mortally wounded during the five hours of combat. Today, The Franklin Memorial Ass'n. is raising funds for bronze busts cast of five of the six Southern generals who died there (Patrick Cleburne's is already done.) Each will cost \$5,000 and will be placed in the Carter House Museum at Franklin, Tenn. If interested in contributing, write Franklin Mem. Ass'n., Box 1641, Murfreesboro, TN Zip 37133.