



The COURIER OF THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

CLEVELAND, OHIO

MAY, 1966

Vol. 9, No. 8

78th Meeting

DATE:	TUESDAY, MAY 10, 1966
SPEAKER:	DR. PAUL SCHEIPS
SUBJECT:	"THE FOUNDER OF THE SIGNAL CORPS"
PLACE:	HERMIT CLUB-DODGE COURT
PRELIMINARIES:	6:00 p.m. DINNER: 7:00 p.m.

DINNER RESERVATIONS

Please use the enclosed, stamped envelope to forward your dinner reservations for the May 10 meeting (\$4.75 per person) for you and your guests. This will help greatly to reduce the usual confusion caused by at-the-table collection.

If your decision to attend can be made only at a time too late for mailing your check, please do not hesitate to come on this account. You can pay JOHN STEVNING on arrival.

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NEXT MEETING

Paul Joseph Scheips, Ph.D.

"THE FOUNDER OF THE SIGNAL CORPS"

At our final meeting on May 10, Dr. Paul Scheips of The American University will talk on Albert James Myer, founder of the Signal Corps.

Dr. Scheips' account will trace Myer's career from his early life through his military career, including his dismissal

from office in 1863, to his restoration to duty after the War.

Dr. Scheips will tell how Myer developed his system of flags in the daytime and torches at night while serving on the Western frontier. In 1860, Myer was appointed a major and became the Army's first official signal officer. He served with McClellan during the Peninsular and Maryland campaigns, at which time he organized and equipped a signal corps.

Myer also worked with the electric telegraph and devised a simple "dial type" system that the ordinary soldier could understand and use. His telegraph work led to a collision with the U.S. Military Telegraph. As a result, in late 1863, Secretary Stanton dismissed Myer as Chief Signal Officer, denied the Signal Corps further use of the electric telegraph, and in the following year relieved Myer from all active service.

These and other interesting events in Myer's career will be presented in greater detail when Dr. Scheips meets our members at the May meeting.

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THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 20, 1957

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REPUBLIC STEEL CORPORATION, CLEVELAND, OHIO

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE APRIL "LADIES NIGHT" MEETING

A picture of a city changing under the impact of four years of war was presented by Mrs. Robert Morris at our 1966 Ladies' Night meeting last month.

Mrs. Morris told the members and their ladies, that in 1861, the citizens of Richmond enjoyed a festive atmosphere of parties, band music, and colorful social gatherings of all kinds. This gradually changed and in 1862, the city's mood was a grim one. Hospitals were filling with the wounded, and many families were saddened by the loss of a brother, son, or husband.

Food became scarce, and the less fortunate rebelled against the good living of those who profited from the war. There were "bread riots" when mobs stormed the food stores and looted the supplies of bread and meat.

During the spring campaign of 1864, benefits were held where the participants played charades and other games popular at the time. And finally, in 1865, the mayor surrendered the city to Federal troops and asked them to restore order and establish some kind of civic administration.

By that time, of course, President Davis had departed with the government records and the treasury, which amounted to less than \$500,000.

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More on the March Meeting

Because of the time element in getting out last month's "Courier", we were unable to include all the copy for Joe Nunley's talk on Tennessee bushwhackers during the Civil War. Here, then, is additional comment from Les Swift, our Program Chairman.

Our speaker, Dr. Joe Nunley gave us an interesting and well-organized talk on Tennessee bushwhackers during the Civil War. He started by pointing out that the term "bushwhacker" applies to certain classes of Confederate guerrillas and went on to divide bushwhackers into several classes. Some operated from patriotic motives to further the Confederate cause; some were motivated by a desire for personal revenge; and a good many were criminal types too shiftless to do other than live the life of a predator who preyed on both sides. It was also pointed out that this group did not have the quasi-official status of the Missouri guerrillas and were far beneath the partisan rangers that were led by Mosby.

Dr. Nunley was raised in McMinnville, Tennessee, which is not too far south of the area where most of the bushwhackers operated. Living in this town, he acquired a detailed knowledge of his subject during many years of contacts with the natives, listening to the oft-repeated tales told by second and even first generation "old timers." This type of information has not been set down in print and consists of a bit of the annals of the Civil War -- unless Dr. Nunley prepares a written account -- which does not seem to have been done, to this writer's knowledge.

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BATTLE OF THE CRATER

Some interesting observations on this famous engagement were made by Mr. Jim Kretschmann, Supervisory National Park Service Historian, at a speech before the Richmond Civil War Round Table. You may be interested

Battle of the Crater (Con't)

In this account of his remarks from that round table's newsletter.

"Jim opened his address by designating the Battle of the Crater as 'an ignoble failure' in military tactical execution and 'an engineering success' in tactical planning. Briefly reviewing the events preceding the debacle at the Crater, he observed that Grant after successively placing Lee on the defensive in the battles from The Wilderness to Cold Harbor became haunted by the 'specter of Cold Harbor' where his futile and fateful frontal assaults had proved so costly. On crossing the James River his strategy envisaged the so-called Anaconda plan, a princer-like involvement that would put a strangle hold on the Army of Northern Virginia. He was, therefore, not overly enthusiastic when, from the regimental commander of the Pennsylvania 8th, there filtered up to him the proposal to dig a tunnel 510 feet long from the Union line to a point beneath the Confederate line. Upon breaching the line of the enemy the troops of Burnside's 9th Corps would sweep through the gap, deploying behind the Confederates on either side.

"What went awry? Virtually everything on the Union side following the blast. Meade, who throughout the undertaking had been uncooperative, recast the previously approved tactical plans designed by Burnside. Ferrero's division of colored troops, which was to have led the assault, must be supplanted by one of the three white divisions. Burnside, now grown indifferent, resorted to the selection by a draw-of-straws which brought forth the least capable of the four divisions - the First Division commanded by Ledlie. Then Meade ordered a change in the plan for deployment of the assault force once the Confederate line had been pierced. Such other minor details as removing the abatis and chevaux-de-frise from in front of the Union earthworks so that the assault force could move with order across "no man's land" and provision made for the soldiers to get out of their own earthworks with ease, were overlooked.

Ledlie and Ferrero were enjoying the relative comfort of a bombproof fortified by an intake of ardent spirits. Of the four

division commanders of the 9th Corps, only Potter of the Second accompanies his men in the assault."

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All About Ages of Confederate Officers at Stone's River

At Stone's River every unit, (twenty-nine in all), brigade or above, was commanded by an officer ranking as brigadier-general or better. Officers were youthful, compared to today's mortality tables, averaging 40.5 years. Despite an unkind photographer, the Army of Tennessee's head man, Braxton Bragg, had just turned 45. The tottering old man of the Army was Daniel Donelson at 61 who didn't survive the war. Just four months after Stone's River he died with his boots off. Next among the aged was Leonidas Polk who was 56 and looked every second of it.

Youngster among the general officers was the banty from Augusta, Georgia, "Little Joe" Wheeler, who was only 26 when he took over Bragg's cavalry operations. James Rains, an attorney and associate editor of the NASHVILLE BANNER, met his end in a cottonfield just south of the National Cemetery. His body was not released to his family for fear of a rabble-rousing "Secesh" funeral in Nashville. He remained in his cottonfield mausoleum until 1888 when he was reinterred in Nashville's Mt. Olivet. John Pegram was only 30. He was killed at Hatcher's Run on February 6, 1865, thereby carrying to the grave the mystery of Breckinridge's failure to bring up reserves on the morning of December 31.

- from "The Bugle" of the Nathan Bedford Forrest Round Table, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee.

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