



THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

MAY, 1977

Vol. 20 No. 9

----- 172nd Meeting-----

Date: Tuesday, May 10
Speaker: James E. Chapman
Subject: Admiral David G. Farragut
Place: The Hermit Club, Dodge Court
Preliminaries: 6:00 P.M. Dinner: 7:00 P.M.

DID FARRAGUT SAY AT MOBILE BAY, "DAMN IT, LOOK OUT FOR THE TORPEDOS! FULL SPEED AND HEAD OUT OF HERE"?

No way says our speaker, fellow member and past-president James Chapman. Jim rates Farragut not only as the foremost naval figure of the Civil War, but as the most prominent American naval officer between the War of 1812 and the Spanish American War. He considers Farragut as a professional sailor and naval officer in every sense of the word. The two most notable exploits of his career were the taking of New Orleans by working a fleet of ships up the Mississippi River passed Confederate fortifications, and his passage of fortifications into Mobile Bay later in the War.

Jim is a lawyer with the firm of Baker Hostetler & Patterson. He is a graduate of Ohio University and obtained his law degree cum laude from Ohio State.

Round Table members who heard his previous talks before our group on "The Blockade -- How the Navy Won the War" and "The Boston Tea Party" know that Jim will give an interesting and scholarly address.

DAVID G. FARRAGUT

b. July 5, 1801	Campbell's Station, Tenn.
d. August 14, 1870	Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Dec. 17, 1810	Entered U. S. Navy as a Midshipman
Aug., 1811	Midshipman, U.S.S. ESSEX, 32 gun frigate
June, 1813	Midshipman (prize master) ship BARCLAY
March 28, 1814	Captured in action with HMS PHOEBE and HMS CHERUB
Nov., 1814	U.S.S. SPARK, brig (Released from parole)
March, 1815	U.S.S. INDEPENDENCE, 74 (Mediterranean)
1816	U.S.S. WASHINGTON, 74 (Mediterranean)
1817-18	Aide to U.S. Consul Tunis
1819-21	U.S.S. FRANKLIN, 74
1819	Acting Lt., U.S.S. SHARK, brig
Nov. 20, 1820	passed Midshipman
May 1822	U.S.S. JOHN ADAMS, sloop of war
Dec., 1822	U.S.S. GREYHOUND, schooner
August, 1825	Lieutenant, U.S.S. BRANDYWINE
1826-28	New Haven, Conn.
Dec., 1828	U.S.S. VANDALIA, sloop of war
Feb., 1830-32	Norfolk, Va.
Dec., 1832	1st Lt. U.S.S. NATCHEZ, sloop of war
June, 1834	Lt. (commanding) U.S.S. BOXER
1834-38	Norfolk, Va.
April, 1838	Lt. (commanding) U.S.S. ERIE, sloop of war
1839-40	Norfolk, Va.
Feb., 1841	U.S.S. DELAWARE, ship of the line
June 1, 1841	Lt. (commanding) U.S.S. DECATUR
Sept. 9, 1841	promoted, Commander
April, 1844	Executive Officer, U.S.S. PENNSYLVANIA (receiving ship, Norfolk)
Feb., 1847	commanding, U.S.S. SARATOGA, sloop of war
Feb., 1848	Norfolk Navy Yard
1850	Washington, D. C.
1852	Norfolk Navy Yard
1854	Mare Island, California
1855	promoted, Captain
1858	Captain, U.S.S. BROOKLYN, steam sloop of war
1860	Norfolk
Jan. 9, 1862	Flag Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron - U. S. S. HARTFORD
July 16, 1862	Rear Admiral
Dec. 23, 1864	Vice Admiral
July 25, 1866	Admiral

THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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NEWSLETTER

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44101

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FALL FIELD TRIP DATES SETTLED

Field Trip Chairman Bill Bates reports that our Roundtable's 21st Annual Field Trip will be on Friday and Saturday, September 23 and 24. He has firmed up arrangements with Ed Bearss to be our guide. Those on our Vicksburg trip and also last year's trip appreciate being with Ed Bearss "than whom there is no whomer." This year's trip will be to the Shenandoah Valley. Because of its proximity, interesting terrain, and strategic importance, a good size group is anticipated. Full details will be mailed to you during the summer.

DEATH OF HAROLD PETERS

With regret the members of the Roundtable learned of the recent death of Harold Peters who had been a member for several years. He was a retired journalist, formerly with the Plain Dealer.

PORTRAIT OF AN ADMIRAL

"He (D. D. 'Black Dave' Porter) has stirring and positive qualities, is fertile in resources, has great energy, excessive and sometimes not over-scrupulous ambition, is impressed with and boastful of his own powers given to exaggeration in relation to himself -- a Porter infirmity, -- is not generous to older and superior living officers, whom he is too ready to traduce, but is kind and patronizing to favorites who are juniors, and generally to official inferiors. Is given to cliquism but is brave and daring like all his family." Diary of Gideon Welles, Vol. 1, 157.

ARIZONA'S ONLY CIVIL WAR BATTLE

by member Al DeWald

With the outbreak of the Civil War, U. S. troops were withdrawn from the forts guarding the Southwest frontier, leaving settlers all but defenseless against the hostile Indians. Acquisition of this extensive territory as real estate alone was not foremost in Confederate minds but was desired as a route to the California coast. Action in the Southwest was restricted to less than one year of fighting culminating in February and March, 1862, in engagements at Valverde, Apache Canyon, and Glorietta, all in present-day New Mexico.

In February, 1862, Jefferson Davis proclaimed Arizona a territory of the Confederacy and a troop of Texas cavalry, 200 mounted men under the command of Capt. Sherod Hunter, was sent to occupy Tucson, arriving February 28th. This was a village where sympathies were strongly southern and whose 68 American citizens had voted the previous summer to make Arizona a part of the Confederacy. Union supporters soon fled and the Confederate flag became the fourth banner to fly over Tucson, following those of Spain, Mexico, and the United States.

However, it was not destined to fly there for long. Word soon reached Tucson that a California Column, some 1500 men strong and commanded by Union Col. James H. Carleton, was moving east toward Yuma, on the Colorado River, and would continue on to Tucson.

A scouting party of 16 Confederates under Lt. Jack Swilling was returning to its main base at Tucson and it was in a pass at the base of Picacho Peak, about 50 miles north, that Arizona's only Civil War battle was fought, April 15, 1862. As an interesting sidelight, Swilling, who was a prospector, shortly after the war while in this same vicinity noted something different about the ground in the valley of the Salt River--lots of mounds and the ground was littered with broken pottery and nearby ruins of old ditches indicated an ancient irrigation system in the middle of the desert. He shortly organized a company which built a brush dam across the river, enlarged the ditches, laid out a town and thus Phoenix was founded in 1867.

An advance guard from the California Column, about a dozen troopers under the command of Lt. James Barrett, collided with this scouting party and in the ensuing battle (to history, it was the westernmost skirmish of the conflict) Barrett and two of his men were killed and three captured.

Depending on whose version one accepts, it was a Union victory despite the lesser Confederate loss of two killed and two captured.

Following this action, Capt. Hunter withdrew his men from Tucson and headed back east to Texas. On May 20th, Col. Carleton retook the town for the Union, proclaiming Arizona a United States territory, more than a year before Congress got around to doing so officially.

Picacho Peak, midway between Tucson and Phoenix, rises from the flat desert floor as a solitary, rugged and towering mountain and has a distinctive silhouette which "looks like the head of a coyote, tilted skyward, yelping at the moon", as a current descriptive brochure has it. On its flank a new State Park contains a Confederate monument dedicated to Capt. Hunter's Arizona volunteers and a marker describing the historic encounter. The monument is about two miles north of the actual battle site.

DECEPTION IN WARFARE

By member Ray Swanson

In the Civil War the word "hoax" first became a part of every fighting man's vocabulary. Dwarfed by the manpower, money and material of the North, the Confederates resorted to numerous devices and hoaxes to carry on the uneven struggle-land mines, torpedoes in rivers and other congested waterways, Quaker guns made of logs, booby-traps, the first successful submarine, and iron clad warships.

Land mines, a standard form of harassment in two World Wars, was the invention of a Southerner, Brigadier-General Gabriel Rains. He was almost court-martialled for his efforts as some of his superiors considered them to be inhuman. However, less sensitive leaders had Rains transferred to the Confederate Munitions Bureau where he continued to produce destructive devices. One of his most effective creations was a cast iron bomb, encasing a generous charge of gun-powder, which looked exactly like a lump of coal. When placed in the furnace of a Federal warship, great holes were torn in the furnace and sides of the vessel. They became such a threat that Admiral David Porter ordered that any suspicious stranger found carrying a lump of coal near a Union coal barge should be shot on sight.

Nathan B. Forrest tricked a superior Federal force into surrendering by the use of white phosphorus. Encountering four Union block-houses across his path between Spring Hill and Columbia, Tennessee, with no artillery to knock them down, he requested a truce interval with the Union commander.

After this was granted he informed the Federal commander in confidential tones, that he possessed a "secret weapon" capable of burning up both the defenses and the defenders in a few minutes. With a flourish he produced a menacing brown bottle and dashed it against a tree stump. As the chemical met the air, the stump was bathed in a fast consuming fire. It took no more persuasion for Forrest to hoodwink his gullible opponent into capitulation.

An outstanding example of deception occurred in the Peninsula Campaign, McClellan with over one hundred thousand men was to advance only 75 miles through the sloughs and thickets to take the Rebel capital by the back door. It would be difficult but could be done if McClellan would move swiftly before Joseph E. Johnston could collect his scattered divisions and throw them across his path to Richmond.

By various deceptions, Major-General John B. ("Prince Hal") Magruder, provided the necessary time for the Confederate forces to gather for the defense. On April 1, 1862 the Confederates had only 13,580 men to defend the narrow strip between Fort Monroe and Yorktown; a mere handful against McClellan's five corps, backed up by 340 cannons plus the firepower of the U.S. Navy operating in the Chesapeake Bay and on the James and York rivers.

By the means of spies planted in the Federal forces and ostentatious moves made in plain sight of the Union army, McClellan became convinced that Magruder had at least fifty to sixty thousand men in front of him. Moving cautiously ahead the Federals came to a dead halt when confronted with trenches and redoubts from which poked the muzzles of more cannons than even McClellan had brought with him. What McClellan didn't know was that over half the guns were logs hollow bored and painted black to look like the real thing. After further delay to receive more cannon, on May 3rd, McClellan lunged forward with 53,000 men toward Yorktown only to find it evacuated. Magruder had joined Johnston at Williamsburg.

McClellan ordered his cavalry in hot pursuit. As they jogged along a muddy road there was a sudden and loud roar; the front files of blue horsemen disintegrated into a shambles of dead and wounded men and animals. They had ignited the first land mines ever used in war. The Union forces could not possibly know that those were the only four land mines that the Confederates possessed. They reasoned that every road and trail might be planted with these devices. The troopers were ordered to proceed through the wilderness which was bad for the cavalry but ideal for Magruder's lurking rear guards. As with any new weapon there was an outcry but land mines were to be used from that time forward.