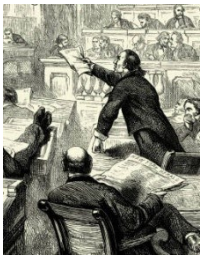
THE CHARGER

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

January 2026 CCWRT Founded 1956 Vol. 50, No. 5

MEETING – January 14, 2026

PROGRAM – The Annual Dick Crews Memorial Debate: "Other Than Ohio, What



State was the Most Important State, North or South, During the Civil War Era."

SPEAKER – Past President William Vodrey, Moderator, and a panel of five CCWRT members, including David F. Parchem-Illinois, Brian Burtka-Louisiana, Don Ianone-New York, Ryan Bailey-South Carolina, and Jack Prause-Virginia.

LOCATION: The Holiday Inn Independence at 6001 Rockside Road, Independence, Ohio 44131, off US Interstate 77

TIME: Social Hour at 6:00 PM and Presentation at 7:30 PM

For reservations email: ccwrtreserve@gmail.com. To ensure dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Website:
http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

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VICKSBURG FIELD TRIP 2025

[Editor's Note—President Charles Patton requested Past President Steve Pettyjohn write a report on the CCWRT trip to Vicksburg in September. Here is Steve's report. The report, along with additional photographs, can also be reviewed on the CCWRT website, https://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com/vicksburg-field-trip-september-2025/.]

THE TRIP

The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable conducted its 2025 annual fall field trip to Vicksburg September 25-28 under the leadership of President Judge Charles Patton with the able assistance of Field Captain and Adjutant Bob Pence. The Vicksburg Campaign is one of the most important in US history and represents the generalship of US Grant at its best. His Vicksburg Campaign has been hailed as brilliant and worthy of being called Napoleonic by many military historians; However, due to its geographic location it has always taken second fiddle to Gettysburg in our general memory. Accolades and congratulations are due for both Judge Patton and Bob Pence for the outstanding organization and planning that made this field trip a splendid success for the 35 members and guests who participated. As our group has not visited the site in 20 years and it is quite a hike from Cleveland, making the decision to go and then pulling off such an excellent trip was remarkable. Both Judge Patton and Bob Pence visited Vicksburg during separate reconnaissance missions in the months preceding the trip. The resulting planning, logistics, and transportation arrangements all contributed to the success of the expedition. Members had choices of travel arrangements including riding as passengers in a large van which stopped at the Franklin battlefield as part of the two day travel plan to get there, using their personal cars to drive, flying into Jackson and then using one of the two large vans rented by the club to transport them to Vicksburg or renting a car in Jackson. The choice of the Courtyard by Marriott was very good as the accommodations were excellent and we were only a few minutes from the battlefield and access to the highways needed to study the maneuver campaign. The choice of our guide, retired Chief Ranger Rick Martin, was first-rate as he was able to give truly insightful observations regarding the campaign but also the efforts to restore and maintain the main site at Vicksburg as well as battlefield sites that were part of the maneuver portion of the campaign. Luck was also on our side as a cold front went through the area on Wednesday lowering temperatures to the low to mid-80s for the duration of our trip. Finally, a big thank you for Mrs. Patton who chose the Walnut Hills restaurant for our Saturday evening dinner and meeting. It was excellent.

THURSDAY EVENING BRIEFING

When we checked in at the Courtyard by Marriott, we were reminded of the importance of the Vicksburg Campaign to the history of the US Army. The lobby of the hotel was occupied by a number of young men and women [well, they were in their late 20s and early 30s] with a couple of older folks who were obviously group leaders. I speculated that they were officers and candidates from the Army General Staff School in Fort Leavenworth. On my first visit to Vicksburg in 2004, I shared the Hampton Inn with a class from there who were on their staff ride which was a study of the Vicksburg Campaign [staff ride being sort of the final exam]. Sure enough, when Judge Patton and I approached them, we learned that indeed they were a class from the General Staff School except the group was now called the School for Advanced Military Studies. We had an interesting discussion before leaving for dinner. During a discussion with three of the students, one asked me what I thought was the decisive point of the campaign. With all modesty, I simply quoted Grant in his memoirs when he said that it was at the point when he landed at Bruinsburg and "was on dry land on the same side of the river with the enemy." The student beamed with satisfaction and turned to his comrades and said "I told you so!" I guess I got promoted in the eyes of those students!

After dinner, we convened for the general briefing provided by Judge Patton, Bob Pence and Chief Ranger Rick Martin. As usual, this addressed timing, recommended clothing, safety tips and the schedules for Day 1 and Day 2. We were also given a briefing on the condition of the park which I found to be very disappointing. Due to failures of preventive maintenance and effective park management over the last few years, access to several areas had been lost due to roads collapsing; therefore, we would not be able to see the Grant monument, Sherman Circle, the US Navy Monument, the National Cemetery and some other areas on the south side of the park. In addition, the magnificent Illinois Monument had been closed for a much needed 1.5-million-dollar restoration. This monument was purposefully built after the completion of the Pennsylvania monument at Gettysburg to ensure that it was larger and more elaborate. A more positive picture was presented by Bess Averett, Executive Director of the Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park. Founded in 2008, this group is playing catch-up compared to its sister organization in Gettysburg but is making considerable progress to improve the Park. Funding and planning are underway for an impressive

and new park visitor center that will be operated by the Friends in conjunction with the NPS and the state of Mississippi. Hearing about all of the plans along with the fund-raising operations that were being successfully implemented left me with the impression that within two to three years considerable progress will have been made and visiting the park and area a few years from now will be an all new and exciting prospect.

DAY 1 – THE MANEUVER CAMPAIGN

For our Friday adventures to examine Grant's brilliant campaign to besiege Vicksburg, we were able to travel together with a brand-new bus with the able guidance of our guide Rick Martin. One of the advantages of our Roundtable trips is our wonderful experience of having local guides who are historians to help us understand the events we are studying. This trip was no exception. We were able to access areas that the average tourist and even a dedicated historian might have trouble finding and interpreting. Our stops included the Mississippi River in the area of Bruinsburg where Grant landed, Grand Gulf where the initial attempt to land was repulsed, the battlefields at Port Gibson and Raymond where attempts by different Confederate Generals to stop Grant's advance were stymied, the road to Jackson, and finally the battle at Champion Hill where Pemperton was decisively defeated [Winston Churchill in his book The Great Democracies called Champion Hill the most important battle fought on the North American continent.]. We stopped at the impressive Windsor Ruins for a break and a chance to enjoy our box lunches. There are a wo dozen towering columns that are the ruins of this mansion that was supported by a plantation of over 300 enslaved persons. It gave us all pause to think about the institution, society and economy represented by these ruins. At Grand Gulf, we explored one of the two forts that are part of the site, the very interesting museum, and other buildings. Our members also helped save our bus and bus driver from calamity by holding back tree branches that were blocking the road and short circuited our tour of the Grand Gulf area. The stops at Port Gibson and Raymond were good reminders of the value of the local guide as Rick Martin did a wonderful job of interpreting the terrain and the battlefield maneuvers of both sides. The

Raymond battlefield has seen considerable restoration and improvement since my last visit there about 10 years ago. We stopped at two sites for our review of Champion Hill. The first was the Coker House on the south side of the battlefield where McClernand failed to move aggressively and the second was at the crossroads which was a key feature of the northern part of the battle where Grant and McPherson came close to encircling the confederates. Being on the ground and having an interpreter gave us a very good understanding of the issues of command and control for both sides. The terrain in many places remains the same as during the battle. Its degree of roughness

and danger makes the so called "Wilderness" in Northern Virginia look like a grade school playground. It's easy to see why messages were lost or delayed and overall control was difficult. The American Battlefield Trust recently obtained considerable parts of the battlefield from Sid Champion, V, which facilitated our trip. We did see the new memorial to historian Ed Bearss which is at the crossroads [Jackson Road, Middle Road, Raymond Road]. However, the area is underdeveloped and under interpreted. We were told to look out for snakes, ticks and even bears. Don't expect a Gettysburg like experience – yet.

DAY 2- VICKSBURG SIEGE & SURRENDER

Day 2 of our visit was devoted to the Vicksburg National Military Park where we were able to stop and see a number, but as mentioned not all, of the important sites. Our first stop at Battery DeGolyer, part of McPherson's Corps area of operations, gave our guide the opportunity to provide insights into the Confederate fortifications and defensive scheme while also showing the difficulties faced in conducting the two failed assaults on May 19 and May 22. These difficulties were reinforced later in the day when we visited the Confederate defenses at the Stockade Redan assaulted by Sherman's Corps and the famous scene of the 13th US Infantry Regiment which earned its nickname of "First at Vicksburg." Our visit included a stop at the Railroad Redan, assaulted by troops from Iowa in McClernand's Corps who made a lodgment but were forced out by a ferocious counterattack by Texas regiments. All the forts were guarding roads or railroads that presented gaps in the defenses. All the assaults were funneled into the only semi-level ground available which basically followed the roads and led into the teeth of the defender's firepower. The forts were 20 feet or more in height above the surrounding terrain and most had a trench in front of them. Even pictures do not do justice to the difficulty of assaulting these positions. Rick Martin showed the importance of the Union siege strategy using the emplacement of the artillery at the Battery DeGolyer site and other locations along with how the Union developed successful siege tactics. Basically, after failing in the two assaults due to poor planning and the strength of the defenses, the Army of the Tennessee conducted very competent siege operations with a handful of trained engineers giving effective direction to the thousands of volunteers who also brought expertise from their civilian lives. This was emphasized when we stopped at the Shirley House and visited the exterior of the Illinois Monument and the adjacent siege lines to the Third Louisiana Redan, fortifications that were blown up by a mine on June 25. While the follow up assault failed, the impact of this attack along with the knowledge that several other mining tunnels were being built [there were six], were some of the factors that induced Pemberton to surrender. Rick Martin pointed out that the Confederate defenders lost about 3,500 men during the siege while Union losses were about 1,500. These figures were the reverse of the results of the two assaults in May when Union losses were over 3,500 and Confederate around 1,500. Skillful positioning of trenches and sniper positions along with massive artillery firepower that was also situated for maximum advantage created the positive Union results. In addition, Union troops rotated in and out of the trench lines while Confederate defenders were left in the

line for the duration of the siege. This led to exhaustion for the defenders who were prone to make fatal mistakes and to be far less effective in returning fire. Our major briefings for this part of the visit were held at the DeGolyer battery site and the Shirley House. The survival of the Shirley House during the siege was nothing less than miraculous. It stands within 100 yards or so of the siege lines and was the only house

that was not destroyed. It has been preserved and is open for tours at times. While there, we had the chance to review more plaques recognizing the enslaved people who worked at the Shirley plantation and made it possible. Recent research utilizing diaries, deed books, Freedman Bureau records, and auction advertisements in newspapers have restored their names. This was another opportunity to reflect on the nature of the war. Our stop at the US Colored Troops monument reinforced our feelings of slavery and emancipation being the root causes of the war. The monument to the USCT was the first honoring African American troops who served in the Civil War to be built on a National Parks Battlefield. I'm not sure if any others have been placed at battlefields since then, but this is the most dramatic and symbolic. It shows a wounded USCT soldier being helped by a fellow soldier and an enslaved person. At this stop, Rick Martin related the story of the Battle of Millikin's Bend which occurred in June of 1863. A large Confederate force from Arkansas attacked Grant's major supply base which was defended by a small regiment of white troops and several regiments of USCT which were in the process of forming and training. Many of the USCT troops were just learning how to load their muskets when the attack occurred. While saved by the prompt action of Naval gunboats, the USCT troops were considered to have fought bravely while suffering significant casualties. This fight convinced Grant and others that Black troops would fight and would be a significant addition to Union forces.

USS CAIRO

When I first saw the USS Cairo at Vicksburg back in 2004, I let out a yelp and an "OH WOW!" Not once but three times and almost drove off the road. While I wasn't driving this time, the sight of the Cairo is always inspiring. The USS Cairo was the lead class of the City Class iron clad gunboats built to lead the way in clearing the Mississippi and other southern rivers. It was sunk by a mine ["torpedo" in Civil War terminology] in December of 1862 and disappeared into the depths of the Yazoo River just north of Vicksburg. Almost a century later, it was rediscovered by then Park Ranger Ed Bearss and his friend and colleague geographer and historian Warren Grabeau. They were able to raise the ship and after many trials and tribulations it has occupied a special place at the Vicksburg National Battlefield Park with its accompanying museum. The museum provides considerable details to assist in understanding the history of the Cairo and its restoration. The ability to walk through

the ship really brings its story alive. It is indeed a highlight of the visit.

A NOTE ON STATUES, MONUMENTS AND OTHER STUFF

Trivia Question: Which National Military Park has the most statues and monuments? Gettysburg or Vicksburg? Answer: Vicksburg with 1,359 beats Gettysburg with 1,328. The Vicksburg total includes 245 regimental monuments including 39 from Ohio. It includes impressive state monuments like the Illinois, Texas, Iowa, Minnesota or Wisconsin [where we had our group picture taken]. It has heroic statues of Generals and other leaders. Jefferson Davis is here along with Indiana's Civil War Governor Oliver P. Morton. Even Pemperton has a monument. What won't you find? Start with an Ohio State Monument which is conspicuously missing. Oh, you won't find a statue of the two Ohio Corps commanders – Sherman and McPherson. And yes, there is the impressive equestrian Grant monument but check out the large lettering at the base – "ILLINOIS." Yes, Illinois has claimed Grant at this site and its impressive domed monument where Grant is listed right below Lincoln as important "sons of Illinois." According to Rick Martin, there is space reserved for an Ohio Monument along with those dedicated to Sherman and McPherson, but it will take action by the state of Ohio to build them.

Finally, a note on Vicksburg the town. If you are planning a visit, don't leave out some of the sites in the city itself. These would include the Old Court House Museum where Jeff Davis got his start along with Pemberton's HQ and the Balfour House which are down the street. We were able to view them at the end of our trip. Also, Washington Street is the old town area with architecture that resembles New Orleans. It contains restaurants and bars along with a boutique hotel or two. The street was closed while we were there as the city was celebrating its bicentennial with concerts and a street fair. Besides our Saturday night group dinner, I had dinner with at Walnut Hills restaurant Friday night and both meals were excellent. Plan to spend some time in the city to relax after the battlefields.

This ends my comments about our epic trip to Vicksburg. It was quite a trip. Hopefully, our Roundtable will return to a revitalized and more beautiful park sometime in the next decade.

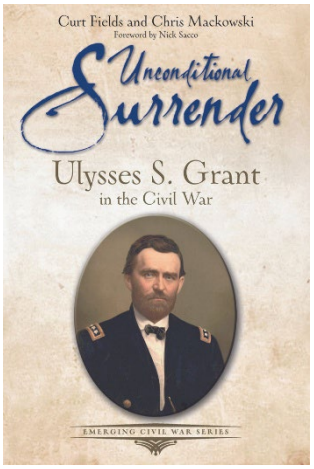
~Steve Pettyjohn

The Editor's Desk

SOME NEW YEAR ODDS AND ENDS—as 2026 begins, I again want to thank you all for the privilege of serving CCWRT as the editor of our newsletter, *The Charger.* I enjoy the job immensely, and each month I look forward to receiving and reviewing your submissions. We have some excellent writers and historians in our group. Keep up the good work! Remember, we can always use additional material. Please do not hesitate to contact me at dkfonner@gmail.com with your comments and ideas for future submissions. We could use some personal travel stories to Civil War sites,

family accounts from the Civil War era, book reviews, and articles on just about any Civil War topic. Submissions are only limited by your imagination.

Presently, I am reading Dr. Curt Fields' new biography of General Grant, *Unconditional Surrender: Ulysses S. Grant in the Civil War* (a Christmas present). All I can say is that Dr. Fields and his co-author, Chris Mackowski, have produced an excellent study of the man. The CCWRT is quite familiar with Fields' portrayal of Grant as a living historian. He has done programs here in Cleveland at least a couple times in the past two years. He probably knows more about Grant than any other historian today, and his first-person presentations of Grant's life



give him a personal perspective on the man and the general that is hard to duplicate. When talking or listening to Fields, it is like meeting Grant in person. Of course, he can't help but bring that personal touch into his writing.

Chris Mackowski urged Dr. Fields to write the book. As co-author and editor, Mackowski states that Fields was at first hesitant, but the finished product is extremely informative, clearly written, and has something for the general reader of Civil War history as well as the scholars. There are numerous illustrations in the book. Mackowski points out that it was his idea to include a generous portion of pictures of Dr. Fields in his Grant persona. Fields, like Grant himself, was shy of such self-promotion, so Mackowski takes full responsibility for the decision if any readers should object. It is indeed a short but informative book on Grant, and it contains an excellent bibliography for anyone looking for more to read. Check it out!

OOPS! Finally, we have been informed of a couple of errors in last month's piece on the CCWRT Oberlin trip. The architect on several Oberlin buildings was not Kat Gilbert but Cass Gilbert. In addition, General Cox married a daughter of Oberlin College President and Evangelist, Charles G. Finney, not Charles Manson.

DON'T MISS IT!

The Annual Dick Crews Memorial Debate

January 14, 2026

7:30 PM The Independence Holiday Inn

***TOPIC:* Other than Ohio, What Was the Most Important State, North or South, During the Civil War?**

Moderator, Judge William Vodrey, will oversee the event. Participants are not expected to be experienced in debate or to possess any specialized historical training. The following CCWRT members are debating on behalf of their chosen states:

Ryan Bailey – South Carolina
Brian Burtka – Louisiana
Don Ianone – New York
David F. Parchem – Illinois
Jack Prause – Virginia

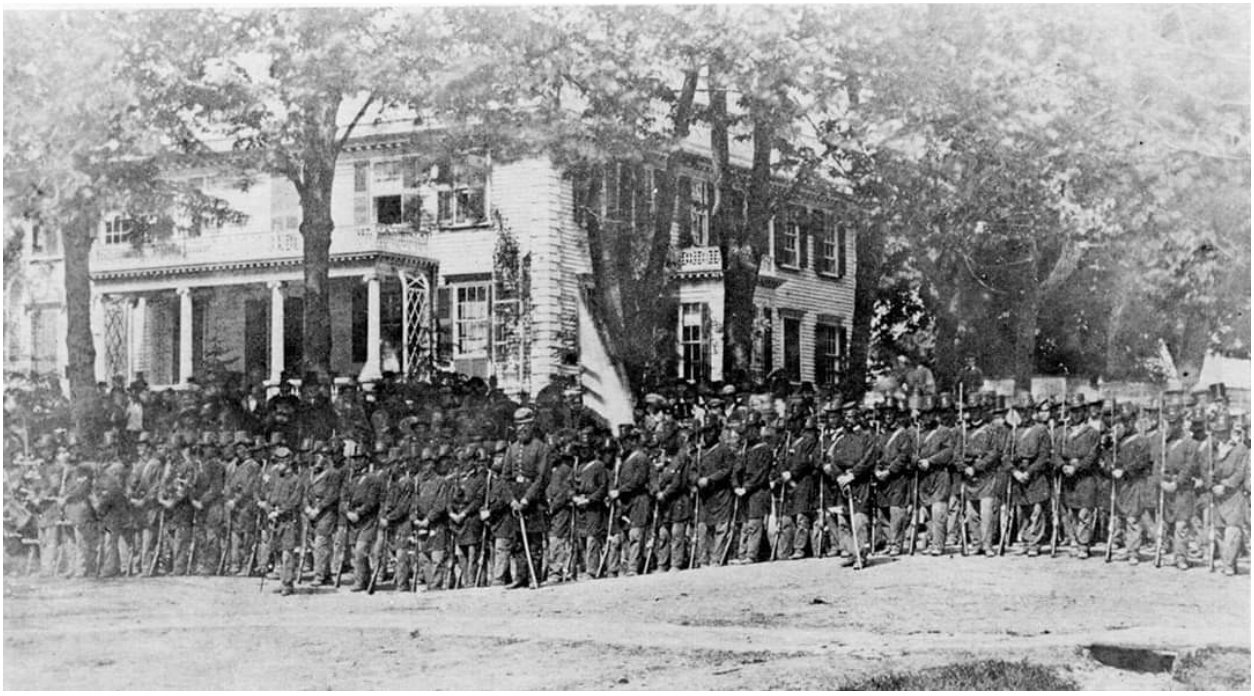
As always, the winner will be awarded FABULOUS PRIZES!

HUZZA FOR THE CCWRT 2026 FIELD TRIP!

September 17-20, 2026

Shenandoah Valley to Study the 1862 Valley Campaign

Check the CCWRT website and your CCWRT emails for details and registration information.



Company G, 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers, in June 1861

Rhode Island: The Smallest State's Contribution to the Union Cause

By Dennis Keating

During the Civil War, Rhode Island provided 25,236 volunteers to the Union's armed forces. That included 8 infantry regiments, 3 cavalry regiments, and 14 artillery batteries. 1,685 died, including Brigadier General Isaac Peace Rodman at the battle of Antietam .

Answering Lincoln's call for volunteers after Fort Sumter, two of Rhode Island's infantry regiments (1st and 2nd) were among the first to arrive in Washington City to protect the capital. At the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861, the two regiments served in the brigade commanded by Ambrose Burnside, Colonel of the 1st Rhode Island. They were engaged on Matthews Hill. The Colonel of the 2nd Rhode Island was killed. Dying, he said: "Now show them what Rhode Island can do." Serving as an aide to Burnside, was William Sprague, IV, the "Boy" Governor of Rhode Island. In 1863, the wealthy Sprague married Kate Chase, daughter of former Ohio Governor and Lincoln's Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase. Their marriage ended in divorce in 1882. Memorable about this battle as recounted in Ken Burns' Civil War documentary was the death of Major Sullivan Ballou of the 2nd Rhode Island. Writing to his "very dear" wife Sarah a week before the battle, Ballou's lengthy letter included:

"[Forseeing a battle] …I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, not that, when my last breath escapes me on the battle-field, it will whisper your name…But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you in the garish day, and the darkest night amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours always, always, and, if the soft breeze fans your cheeks, it shall be my breath, or the cool air cools your throbbing temples, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dear; think I am gone, and wait for me, for we shall meet again."

The other memorable battles fought by the Rhode Islanders included:

The capture of New Bern, North Carolina on March 14, 1862, by forces commanded by Ambrose Burnside. The 4th Rhode Island played a key role in this Union victory. This force became the nucleus of the IX Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

At Gettysburg on the third day, a gun of Battery A of the 1st Rhode Island Light Artillery attached to the Second Corps helped to repel the Rebel attack at the Angle. The battery suffered 4 dead and 24 wounded during the battle. Its monument stands on Hancock Avenue.

The two most recognized Rhode Island army commanders were Ambrose Burnside and George Greene.

Ambrose Burnside's military legacy was his failure at the battle of Antietam to lead his wing timely against Lee's badly outnumbered defense of Sharpsburg, the devastating defeat at Fredericksburg as commander of the Army of the Potomac, and his disastrous decision that led to the virtual Union massacre at the attack on Petersburg at the battle of the Crater, which resulted in his removal as the IX Corps commander. He did successfully defend Knoxville, Tennessee against James Longstreet at the battle of Fort Sanders.

A notable incident occurred on May 1, 1863, after Burnside, commanding the Department of Ohio, issued an order forbidding criticism of the Union war effort as an act of treason to be tried by a military tribunal. That night, Union troops arrested Ohio Congressman and Copperhead enemy of the Lincoln administration Clement L. Vallandigham for a speech at a public rally in Mount Vernon, Ohio, calling Lincoln a tyrant. He was tried and found guilty of treason. However, not wanting to make him a martyr, Lincoln exiled him to the South. He later ran

unsuccessfully for Ohio Governor from refuge in Canada and then was instrumental in making the peace platform of the Democratic Party's defeat in the 1864 presidential campaign.

After the war, Burnside was elected Governor of Rhode Island three times (1866-1869) and U.S. Senator (1874-1881). He was also elected Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (1871-1872) and also as the first Commander of the National Rifle Association (1871). Burnside is probably best known for his sideburns (from "burnsides").

Before the war, George Sears Greene was a civil engineer and a founder of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Architects. A West Pointer, he rejoined the army at the age of 60 and was appointed colonel of the 60th New York VI. He became a Brigadier General in 1862. Greene's best moment in the war came at the battle of Gettysburg. On the second day, his New Yorker brigade of the XII Corps was left to defend by itself Culp's Hill. His entrenchment of Union troops there was key to repelling Confederate attacks. His statue stands there. That fall he went West with the Corps but was severely wounded defending Chattanooga. He ended the war in North Carolina. Greene died at age 97.

A Rhode Island soldier who gained fame posthumously was Elisha Hunt Rhodes of the 2nd Rhode Island. His wartime diary was quoted frequently in the Ken Burns Civil War documentary. From being a corporal, he advanced to the rank of lieutenant colonel in command of the regiment in 1865. He led a successful attack on the Petersburg defenses on April 2, 1865.

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"My Very Dear Wife" – The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Ballou" National Park Service

Robert Hunt Rhodes. All for the Union: The Civil War Diary and Letters of Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

Band of the 33rd New York Volunteers

Classical Music and the American Soul: A Cultural History Across the Civil War Era

By Don Iannone, Ph.D.

Before the Storm: A Nation Discovering Its Musical Voice

In the decades leading up to the Civil War, America was rapidly shaping a musical identity that drew deeply from European traditions while growing into its own cultural character. Urban centers such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and New Orleans became the seeds of a new concert culture, a culture increasingly committed to the prestige of orchestral and operatic performance (Crawford, 2001). The founding of the New York Philharmonic in 1842 and the vigor of Boston's choral societies signaled a nation eager to elevate its artistic standing and align itself with European aesthetic standards (Horowitz, 1994). European virtuosos toured widely, and American audiences embraced their symphonies, chamber works, and operatic selections with a blend of curiosity and cultural ambition. Italian opera dominated the public imagination; Verdi, Donizetti, and Bellini became household names in theaters from Manhattan to New Orleans (Gerhard, 2019). At the same time, the parlor piano emerged as a symbol of domestic refinement and middle-class aspiration. Families gathered around these instruments for music-making that blurred the boundaries between entertainment and cultural cultivation, allowing simplified classical repertoire to mingle with sentimental American songs (Kenney, 1999). By 1860, the foundation of American musical taste had been laid—not through formal conservatories, which were still uncommon, but through the interplay of public spectacle and private performance.

A Nation at War: Music on the Battlefield and the Home Front

When war erupted in 1861, the country's fragile musical infrastructure did not collapse, it shifted, adapted, and in some places intensified. Military bands became the most widespread carriers of classical repertoire, their brass voices echoing across camps, towns, and battlefields (Rohr, 2011). These ensembles performed operatic overtures, patriotic marches, and arrangements of well-known symphonic themes, offering soldiers emotional grounding amid the turmoil of war. Union and Confederate troops alike cherished overtures from *Il Trovatore*, *William Tell*, and *Semiramide*, and for many soldiers, these performances constituted their first, and perhaps only, direct encounters with classical music (McWhirter, 2014). One of the most striking musical phenomena of the era unfolded along the Rappahannock River, where bands from opposing armies exchanged melodies across the water, concluding some evenings with the shared yearning of "Home, Sweet Home" (Soskis, 2010). In cities far from the front, opera houses and concert halls continued to function when circumstances allowed, offering civilians brief refuge from wartime anxieties. New York's Academy of Music, for example, remained active throughout the conflict and presented Verdi's operas even in its darkest years. Meanwhile, American pianist-composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk toured extensively through the North, bringing concerts to civilians and soldiers alike. His fusion of European virtuosity with American musical idioms made him one of the nation's most beloved performers, an artist admired on both sides of the sectional divide (Starr, 1992).

The Southern Soundscape: Culture in a Time of Scarcity

Although the Confederacy lacked the institutional advantages of the North, it maintained a vibrant, and increasingly strained musical culture during the early war years. New Orleans, long a center of operatic life, continued to stage performances until Union occupation, sustaining its deep French and Italian traditions and helping preserve European repertoire in the South (Kmen, 1966). Smaller orchestras and chamber ensembles in Richmond, Charleston, Mobile, and Savannah performed when material and economic conditions permitted, maintaining a semblance of cultural continuity in a time of upheaval. Confederate military bands, like their Union counterparts, played a blend of popular tunes, European operatic selections, and classical arrangements. Diaries and letters from Southern soldiers reveal how profoundly music functioned as an emotional outlet—helping men endure separation, hardship, and fear (McWhirter, 2014). Even in scarcity, the South sustained a musical life that retained both its sophistication and its yearning.

Private Music-Making: The Parlor as America's Most Enduring Stage

As war reshaped the public musical landscape, the parlor remained the most enduring stage for American music-making on both sides of the conflict. The domestic piano symbolized cultural aspiration, emotional refuge, and family cohesion. Even in towns touched by troop movements or shortages, families continued to play Chopin nocturnes, Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, Schubert lieder in translation, and operatic transcriptions (Crawford, 2001). Sheet music publishing thrived, carrying classical themes, patriotic marches, and sentimental ballads into homes throughout the divided nation. More than any opera house or military band, parlor music shaped nineteenth-century American musical taste, weaving classical melody into the daily rhythms of domestic life. This private tradition offered continuity amid uncertainty, binding households through shared musical experiences that transcended sectional divides.

Aftermath and Renewal: Classical Music in a Reunified Nation

With the end of the war in 1865, the nation entered a period of reconstruction that was cultural as well as political. The musical seeds planted before and during the conflict now grew into a more robust national infrastructure. New conservatories opened, orchestras expanded, and European musicians; many fleeing political turmoil—brought fresh influences to American audiences (Horowitz, 1994). The appetite for classical music intensified in a society eager to redefine itself, and operatic and symphonic repertoire became tools of aspiration and cultural rebuilding. Gottschalk's legacy shaped postwar musical identity,

and later in the century, composers such as Edward MacDowell signaled a growing desire for a distinctly American classical voice (Starr, 1992).

A Legacy Larger Than the War

Classical music in the Civil War era cannot be understood solely through the lens of conflict. It belonged to a broader cultural landscape shaped by immigration, urban growth, domestic ideals, and the longing for intellectual legitimacy. The war amplified music's significance but never defined it. From city theaters to makeshift military stages, from grand operatic overtures to whispered parlor songs, classical music accompanied daily life, serving as solace, identity, aspiration, and a reminder of shared humanity. Its melodies crossed battle lines, echoed in homes shadowed by uncertainty, and flowed into the hopeful years that followed, helping the nation remember who it had been, and imagine what it might yet become.

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About the Author:

Don Iannone, Ph.D., is a writer in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He is the author of 31 nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and photographic essay books, as well as numerous articles and essays on a wide range of subjects. He has a longstanding interest in the Civil War and classical music. Don is a member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, an organization dedicated to advancing understanding of the Civil War and its role in history and today's world. In 2024, he published The Civil War Yesterday and Today, a book telling the story of the Civil War through historical narrative and poetry, and cautioning that the potential for a modern civil war could grow if Americans fail to overcome their differences and work together to preserve democracy.

U. S. Signal Corps Detachment on Elk Ridge Overlooking Antietam Battlefield

Albert Myer and the United States Signal Corps

By Brian Burtka

Introduction

The nineteenth century was an era of rapid technological development. The telegraph is one of the best examples of this. The telegraph reshaped the United States. Communication was easier, faster, and more reliable. The improvement of communication had a fundamental impact on the American Civil War. Albert Myer, an Army doctor, took telegraphic alphabets and adapted them to field use for the Army. He did this by creating a system of signaling using flags, which became known as wig-wag signaling. To help promulgate and use this system, Myer founded the United States Signal Corps in 1860.

The Signal Corps profoundly impacted the course of the Civil War. This impact unfolded at the strategic and tactical level. At the strategic level, without proper communications, officers did not know where to deploy their soldiers and quartermasters did not know where to send supplies.

At the tactical level, Myer's wigwag system reshaped the battlefield. It allowed commanders to communicate with each other in real time as the battlefield changed and made the battlefield more dynamic. The story of the Signal Corps is intertwined with the story of Albert Myer. Myer considered the Signal Corps to be his greatest achievement. The Signal Corps' story would be incomplete without Myer, and it is difficult to separate the two. The story of this organization and this man is set against the backdrop of the American Civil War. The implementation and evolution of Myer's Signal Corps reshaped battlefield communication and was central to the Union war effort. This story is below.

Pre-Civil War Biography

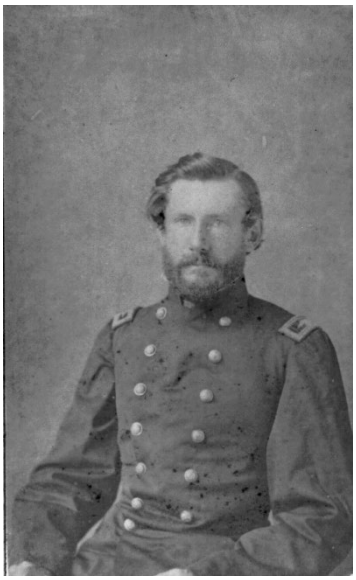

Figure 1. Colonel Albert Myer
Photo Credit: Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002722173/)

Albert Myer was born on September 20, 1828 to Henry Beekman Myer and Eleanor Pope McClanahan. His family moved to Buffalo in 1835, and his mother died shortly after moving there. After this, his father left him in the care of his aunt, Serena McClanahan. Myer attended Geneva College (now known as Hobart College). He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in August 1847. Sometime between 1847 and 1850, Myer began to study medicine and work at a local telegraph office. This would be his first experience with the telegraph, and it would influence the rest of his life. He graduated from the University of Buffalo medical school in February 1851. His thesis was entitled "A New Sign Language for Deaf Mutes." In his thesis, Myer wanted to adapt a telegraph alphabet, similar to Morse Code, to an alphabet of tapping. This would allow a deaf person to communicate by tapping a table or in someone else's palm. This idea would eventually evolve into the communication system that Myer developed using flags.

He spent the next two years in Charleston, SC and Jacksonville, FL practicing medicine. Afterwards, he passed the Army's medical examination on Jan. 17, 1854. He was commissioned into the Army on Sep. 24, 1854 as an Assistant Surgeon with the rank of First Lieutenant. He was sent to Texas for his first assignment. He would spend the next three years there. During this time, Myer served as post surgeon for forts in the area. While in Texas, Myer spent his time doing routine physical examinations, surgery when required, and taking weather observations. Additionally, he was fascinated by the potatoes in the region. He left Texas in July 1857. he married Katherine Walden on August 24, 1857.

In October 1856, Myer sent a letter to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis about developing a system of signals for use in the Army. The idea did not interest Davis, but the next Secretary of War, John B. Floyd, was interested. Floyd gave Myer permission to develop his system. Myer lived in Buffalo for the rest of 1857 and almost all of 1858 developing his system. Myer presented his system to an Army board in March 1859. The board produced a favorable report. Myer used the rest of 1859 to test his signals at Ft. Monroe and at various locations in New York harbor. While testing, Myer was helped by many officers, including 2nd Lt. Edward Porter

Alexander of the Engineers (future founder of the CSA Signal Corps as well as James Longstreet's chief of artillery).

System of Signals

Figure 2. Recreated signal flags.
Photo Credit: taken by author (pictured).

Myer based his system of visual signals on telegraphic alphabets, like Morse code. Telegraphic alphabets assigned each letter of the alphabet to a series of dots and dashes to represent them. When sent on a telegraph, operators listened for the series of dots and dashes, and translated these sounds back to letters. For Myer's system, the dots and dashes are replaced by flag motions. To start, a flagman would hold the flag in the vertical position. If they went left, then back to the vertical, it was known as a "1" motion. If they went right and back to the vertical, it was a "2.". If the flag is lowered in front of them, then back to the vertical, it was a "3." In this system, letters would be represented by a combination of 1's and 2's. For example, A is represented by 12. To make this motion, the flagman would first make a 1 motion to the left, then they would pass the vertical position. They would go to the right to make a 2, then return to the vertical. There would be no pause between the 1 and 2 signal, and that is how this would be known to be a single letter. This process would be done with flags during the day, and torches at night. Because of the motion of the flags, it became known as the "wig-wag" system.

A standard signal kit would contain all the equipment for the flags and torches. The flags were a field of one color with a smaller square of a different color on the inside. The most common flags were a red field with a white square in the middle or a white field with a red square in the middle (see Fig. 2). The flags came in three different sizes: 2'x 2', 4'x 4', and 6'x 6'. The 2'x 2' flag was used for sending signals in campaign circumstances when the distance is not very great. The 4'x 4' flag was the standard flag that would be used, and when needed for long distances, the 6'x 6' flag would be used. The flagpole was 16' in length, and broken up into 4' sections. Additionally, there were torches and the needed supplies for upkeeping them.

This was the signal kit that Myer had at the beginning of 1860. Myer spent the first part of 1860 in Washington getting legislation approved by Congress. He was commissioned Major and Signal Officer of the Army on June 28, 1860. With his system developed and his promotion secured, Myer needed to test his signals in the field. To do this, he was ordered West to the Department of New Mexico. He would spend the rest of 1860 and the early months of 1861 testing his system of signals in an expedition against the Navajo. His commanding officer on this

expedition was Bvt. Lt. Col. Edward R.S. Canby. Myer trained many officers in his system while here, and many would serve him during the Civil War.

Civil War Military Record

Myer was ordered back to the east after Ft. Sumter fell and the Civil War began. He was initially sent to Ft. Monroe. He set up the first training camp here. The Signal Officers here helped to sight Ft. Monroe's batteries against Ft. Calhoun on Rip Raps Island, which had been taken over by the Confederates. To do this, there was one signal party on a barge in the harbor that would communicate with a signal party at the fort. Myer went to Washington on July 15, 1861 to discuss control of the telegraph. At this time, there was also another fledgling organization that controlled the telegraph: the Military Telegraph Corps. Myer thought that the telegraph lines should be under the Signal Corps. The War Department thought otherwise. This would be a source of contention for Myer in the future.

While in Washington, Myer was ordered to help Gen. Irvin McDowell at the rail junction of Manassas. He was also given command of a balloon for field use. The balloon was filled with gas and towed behind Myer's party. He set out for Gen. McDowell at 2:00 AM on July 21. He and his party had difficulty with it because it would get caught in trees while they were towing it. Eventually, it ripped on a tree and Myer sent it back to Washington. The balloon would not see any service during First Bull Run. Myer arrived to the field on the afternoon of July 21. He could not find Gen. McDowell, and ended up serving on Gen. Daniel Tyler's staff during the battle. While Myer would not have his own signals, as all his equipment was at Ft. Monroe, he witnessed the Confederates using his signal system. This was due to Edward Alexander Porter, now an officer in the Confederate Army.

In August 1861, Myer became the Signal Officer of the Army of the Potomac under Gen. George McClellan. In this role, he had two major responsibilities: 1) he needed to set up signals for the Army of the Potomac; 2) he needed to get signal officers trained so that they could go to other Armies in the US. To help achieve both of these ends, he established a Signal Camp of Instruction at Georgetown. By November 1861, there was a signal line established on the Potomac River. Myer spent the winter of 1861-62 finalizing the organization of the Camp of Instruction and obtaining an office in Washington. A major problem for Myer during this time was that he received officers for signal duty via a detail system. This meant that the officers still belonged to their original units, and could be recalled at any time.

In 1862, Myer accompanied Gen. McClellan on the Peninsula campaign. He left Lt. Samuel Cushing in charge of the Signal Office in Washington. Lt. Cushing was in frequent communication with Myer about business from the office. Myer assisted Gen. McClellan throughout the Peninsula campaign and helped to establish what active signal parties should be doing on a campaign. He organized a signal party for each division, and had them in frequent communication with each other. After the Peninsula campaign, he also served at the battle of Antietam. At this point, Myer got permission to take over the Signal Office in Washington and give up field command. Cushing would replace him as the Signal Officer of the Army of the Potomac.

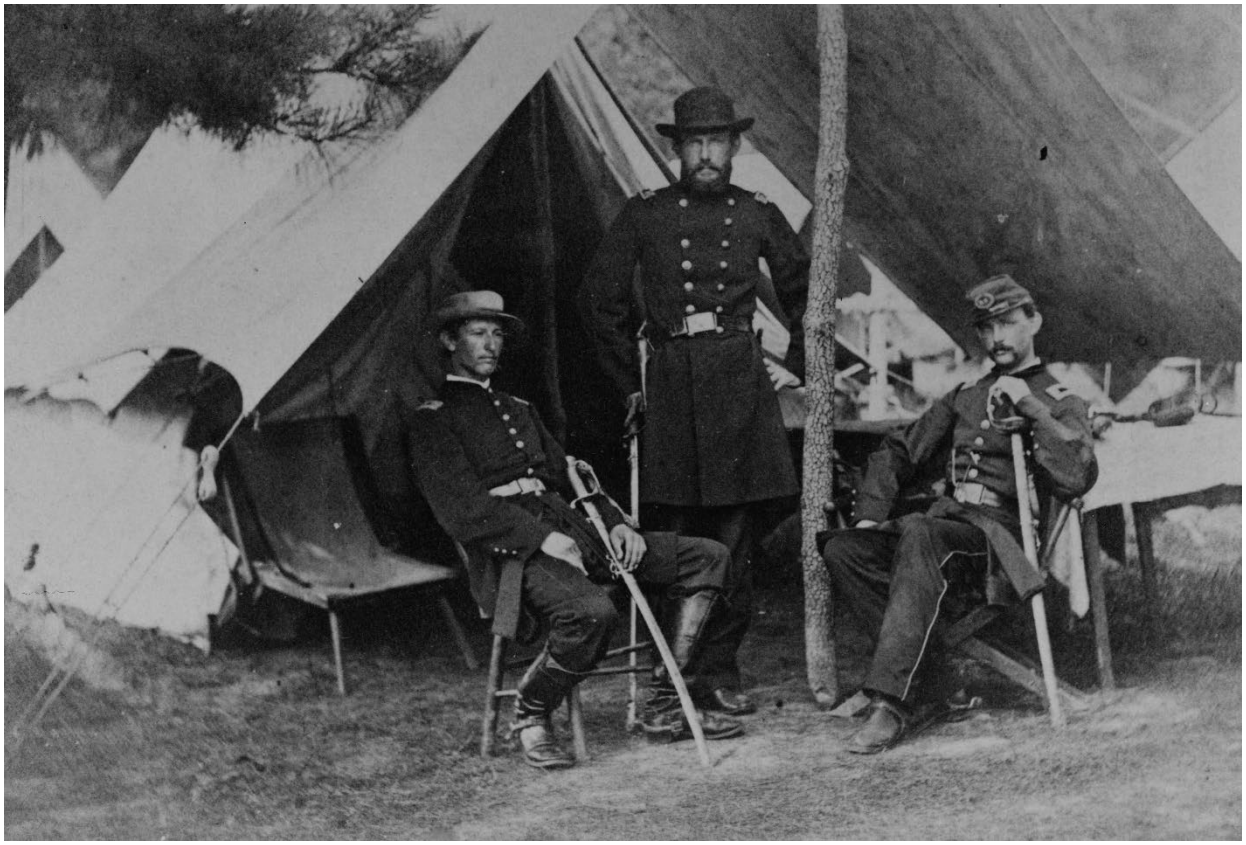

Figure 3. Myer (standing) in the field.
Photo Credit: Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008677140/)

Myer would spend the last few months of 1862 and the first few months of 1863 getting a new bill passed for the Signal Corps. Additionally, he reopened the Georgetown camp in Dec. 1862. Up until now, Myer was the only Signal Officer in the Army; everybody else was on detail duty and did not have commissions as Signal Officers. Myer's bill got passed in March 1863. It established a Signal Corps with a Col. as its chief officer. On April 29, 1863, Myer would be promoted to Col. and Chief Signal Officer of the Army. Myer organized the Signal Corps under its expanded legislation from April to November 1863. Myer established a board to examine officers for the Signal Corps. Additionally, they examined all officers on active signal duty to give them appropriate rank. Lastly, this bill allowed Myer to recruit directly. He was no longer reliant on the detail system that had plagued him since the beginning of the war. Also during this time, Myer invented and perfected the cipher disk that would remain in use for the rest of the war.

During the months of 1863 that Myer was in Washington, the argument over control of the electric telegraph boiled over. Up to this point, the Military Telegraph Corps had been operating all the permanent telegraph lines. Control of field telegraphs was blurred; some of them were controlled by the Signal Corps, others by the Military Telegraph Corps. On November 10, 1863, Myer was ordered to the War Department to meet with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. After this meeting, Myer was dismissed from his position as Chief Signal Officer and was ordered to

report to Memphis, TN. Additionally, Stanton put all telegraphs under the control of the Military Telegraph Corps. This was the end of a long-standing feud between the Signal Corps and the Military Telegraph Corps. Myer thought that the telegraph should be under his control as it was a method of signaling. The head of the Military Telegraph Corps, Col. Anson Stager, thought otherwise.

When Myer arrived in Memphis, he made a report on a line of signal stations from Memphis to Cairo, IL. While in this position, Myer worked on *A Manual of Signals for Signal Officers in the Field*, a general service manual for signal officers. The first edition was published in 1864. In May 1864, Gen. Canby, the same officer that Myer tested his signals in New Mexico under, assigned Myer to be the Chief Signal Officer of the military division of West Mississippi. While in this position, Myer developed the General Service Code, a revised signal code that allowed the Navy and Army to communicate with each other. This would be the last contribution of Myer to the Civil War. Myer was informed in August 1864 that the Senate had failed to confirm his appointment as a Colonel and as Chief Signal Officer of the Army. Sec. of War Stanton never submitted Myer's name and appointment to the Senate. Myer would see no more active duty during the Civil War.

Figure 4. Post-war photo of Brigadier General Myer. Photo Credit: Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006686274/)

Post-Civil War Career and Life

After his dismissal, Myer would return to his family's home in Lakeview, NY, just south of Buffalo. For the rest of 1864, 1865, and most of 1866, Myer tried to get his position back and name cleared. In October 1866, President Andrew Johnson ordered Stanton to reappoint Myer. Myer built up the peacetime Signal Corps. He established a Signal Corps training camp at Ft. Whipple, VA. In 1872, the military telegraph lines were put under control of the Signal Corps. The Signal Corps helped establish the United States Weather Service. Myer was interested in predicting the weather using telegraphs. To do this, he would have military posts to the west report what their weather conditions were. Myer would use this to predict what the forecast for the next few days would be. The weather forecasts were called Probabilities, and this earned Myer the sobriquet of "Old Probabilities." His interest and prowess in meteorology would make him an international star, and he presented at many conferences in Europe. On June 16, 1880, Myer was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Myer would hold the position of Chief Signal Officer until his death on August 24, 1880. His wife and six children survived him. He was buried near the family home in Lakeview. Shortly after his death, Ft. Whipple would be renamed Ft. Myer in his honor.

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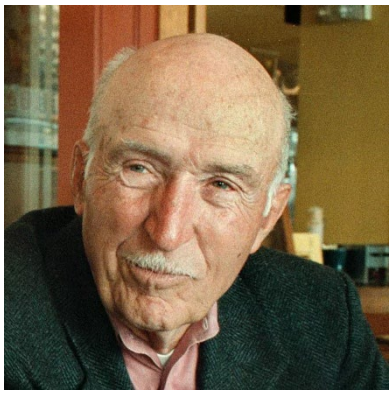
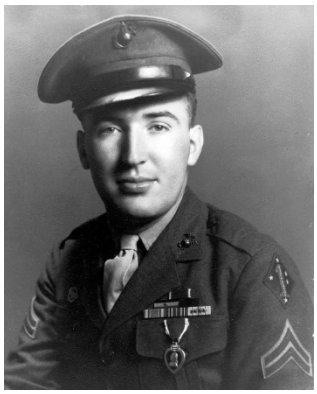
Notes

Additionally, for a treasure trove of material related to the Signal Corps in the Civil War, please see www.civilwarsignals.org. For conflicting dates in Myer's life, Scheips's biography dates were used.





Edwin Cole Bearss

1923-2020

By Brian Kowell

Edwin Cole Bearss was born on June 26, 1923, in Billings, Montana. His parents were Omar Effinger Bearss (1896-1981) and Virginia Louise Morse Bearss (1901-1964). He had one younger brother, Robert (Pat) Bearss. Ed was raised on a 10,000-acre cattle ranch that was 90 miles west of Billings and was named the E bar S. He grew up with kerosene lamps and horse-drawn plows.

Ed and his brother Pat worked on the ranch when not attending school. Their first school, a one-room schoolhouse, Sarpy School, was six miles away and sometimes the boys rode together on horseback to and from the school.

In the winter months, Ed's father, who had served in the Marine Corps in Haiti and Europe during WW I, sometimes would read to the boys about history and the Civil War. Ed had an affinity for the Civil War and named the cattle on the ranch after Civil War battles and generals. When the family went into Billings, Ed remembered listening to stories from the town's Civil War veteran, "Grandpa Henderson [who] used to sit around in the [town's] hotel lobby with his reunion ribbons on." Ed also heard stories about his elder cousin," Hiking Hiram" Bearss (1875-1938), a Marine who was given the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in combat in the Philippines in 1901 and the Distinguished Service Cross in WW I.

In 1937, Ed went away to St. John's Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin. He later returned to attend Hardin High School in Billings.

In December 1941, the Bearss family was sitting fireside listening to the radio. They were listening to the broadcast of a football game between the Chicago Bears and the then Chicago Cardinals when an announcer interrupted the broadcast with news that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. The family, at first, could not believe the news. When the enormity of the Japanese attack was realized and President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced that "It was a day of infamy," Ed said that he became determined to "Join the Marines and get back at those Japs."

After graduating from Hardin High, Ed took the summer off to hitchhike across the United States to visit battlefields. When he returned to Montana, he enlisted in the Marines in April 1942. His basic training was at a Marine base in San Diego, California. He was in the 22nd Marine Regiment. "I had wanted to be a [Marine] Raider since I heard of them in boot camp," Ed said, "and I wanted out of the chicken-shit Twenty-second."

The gung-ho 19-year-old interviewed for the Raider Battalion. During the interview he was asked, "How far can you walk? How far can you swim? Could you kill a man with a knife or strangle him?" He soon found himself a member of the Raider Battalion and after training was sent to the Pacific Theater. Unfortunately, Ed came down with a bad bout of malaria and was left behind in the hospital when the Battalion was deployed. When he recovered, he was reassigned to the 7th Regiment in the 1st Marine Division and sent to New Guinea.

On Christmas night, 1943, after a meal of steak and eggs, Ed boarded a Higgens boat with his regiment and traveled from New Guinea to the Japanese-held island of New Britain where they were to land. The landing was part of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's *Operation Cartwheel* to capture the island and the Japanese fortress of Rabaul. Ed and his fellow Marines splashed ashore at Cape Gloucester and almost immediately engaged the enemy in combat. The Marines slowly seized ground at the point of the bayonet and once a toehold was achieved, quickly dug in. The Japanese, determined to drive them into the sea, launched a series of counterattacks which proved unsuccessful, afterward retreating into the jungled interior.

On January 2, 1944, Ed took the point of his platoon and led them deep into the jungle. Every man in the platoon was ready for combat except for one. That soldier was left behind to guard the camp because, as Ed recorded, "He was yellow." Ed later recalled that that "yellow" marine was the only member of Ed's platoon to make it through the day without being killed or wounded.

"After pushing about half a mile through the dense jungle," Ed remembered, "we approached a stream perpendicular to our line of march and began to cross. On the other side, I saw men, not ours, about thirty to 35 yards away. They were not wearing helmets. So, I opened fire with my rifle. Other firing opened to our left and right, then all hell broke loose. A nest of Japanese machine guns dug into pill boxes on the opposite bank opened on us. The man next to me was shot through both hands and wrists. Screaming, "I'm ruined for life!' he took off running. Another marine coming up was hit and others were falling. All of this happened faster than I can talk.

"I was on my knees when the first bullet struck. It hit me in my left arm, just below the elbow, and the arm went numb. It felt like being hit with a sledge-hammer. It jerked me sideways and then I was hit again, another sledge-hammer blow to my right shoulder. I fell, both arms shattered, and my helmet slipped down over my eyes. I couldn't see. But there were now dead men lying all around me."

Ed later mused that he had probably been hit by an older-model Japanese Type 96 machine gun. Had it been the newer Type 99, he was certain that the second bullet would have hit him in the chest.

"It seemed a long time that I lay there, in fierce pain, pinned down by the Japanese fire . . .. Unable to stand it any longer and afraid of bleeding to death, I decided to risk getting up; the Japanese gun just in front of me was firing off to the right. As I wiggled around, trying to rise, another bullet grazed my butt and another hit my foot. I quit moving."

Lying out in the field, he only had time to think of survival. After a while, he decided to try again.

"They [the Japanese] saw me [move] but couldn't get their gun depressed fast enough before, without the use of either arm, I went over the lip of a knoll and slide down the other side. . . . I still don't know how I did it. If that ground had been level, I would be dead. I realized then how important terrain was in battle."

Lieutenant Thomas J. O'Leary and a U.S. Navy corpsman named Hartman, crawled over to Ed and pulled him back behind the lines enough so stretcher bearers could reach him and carry him to the battalion aid station.

After a long, grueling journey from New Britain to New Guinea and then back to Mare Island, San Diego, Ed spent months in the hospital undergoing multiple surgeries to save his arms. He was still in the hospital on VJ Day. The news of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 "came over the radio the day after I had been to surgery and I remember how disappointed I was I couldn't go out on the town and get drunk," Ed recalled. He spent 26 months in hospitals saving his arms, but with permanent nerve damage. He was decorated and honorably discharged on March 15, 1946.

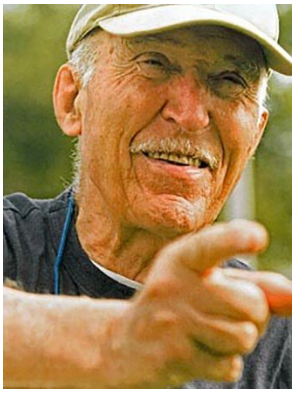
The G.I. Bill benefited Ed Bearss. He went back to school and received a BS in Foreign Services from Georgetown University in 1949 and then earned an MA in History from Indiana University in 1955 with his thesis on Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne.

Ed got a job in Washington D.C. at the Naval Hydrographic Office and with the Office of the Chief of Military History until he joined the National Park Service in 1955. He was sent to the Vicksburg National Military Park. While working at the information desk, a thirty-two-year-old schoolteacher walked in with a question. Margie Riddle (1925-2006) of Brandon, Mississippi asked Ed about Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's Medridian Campaign. That discussion led to the two marrying on July 30, 1958. Margie eventually became Ed's research assistant and authored Civil War books of her own. Ed would author 25 books and numerous articles over his career. The two had three children, a son Edwin Cole Bearss, Jr. Mary Virginia (Ginny) Bearss and Sara Beth Bearss (1960-2012).

Ed spent 11 years at Vicksburg National Military Park and discovered the location of the sunken Civil War gunboat USS *Cairo*. Through his efforts the *Cairo* was raised and what was left of it

was preserved at Vicksburg. To help raise funds for the effort Ed competed on the television show the *$64,000 Challenge.*

In 1966 Ed, Margie and the kids moved to Washington D.C. where Ed became the Research Historian for the NPS. In November 1981, he was named Chief Historian and held that position until July 1994. After that he became the NPS Director's Special Assistant for military sites. He was very active in the preservation movement to preserve battlefields and historic sites. The saying went that," If Ed Bearss says it's worth preserving, then it's worth preserving." He retired from the Park Service on October 1, 1995.



Retirement did not slow Ed Bearss down. Besides his writing, he was frequently a guest speaker at Civil War Symposiums and Civil War Round Tables. Ed has frequently spoke to the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. In fact, he spoke more times than any other speaker in our history. He gave his first talk to our group on October 23, 1962, about Vicksburg, and since then has spoken on various topics such as Brice's Crossroads, the battle of Shiloh, Forrest's and Van Dorn's Raid to Disrupt Grant's March on Vicksburg, and Chickamauga, to name only a few, and all delivered without a note. He was given an honorary, life-time membership to the Cleveland Civil War Round Table.

Ed was at his finest leading Civil War battlefield tours. That is where this author first met Ed Bearss. He gave us a tour of Brandy Station, Kelly's Ford, Cedar Mountain and Jackson's flank march to Manassas Junction. I was blown away. I was at his side like a puppy all weekend. As one author wrote, "as Bearss talks, he marches back and forth, brandishing a silver-headed swagger stick (a gift from the Cleveland CWRT) tucking it from time to time under his withered left arm. He keeps his eyes tightly closed while he lectures. Bearss told him, "That way I can see the events unfolding in front of me.'" Another wrote that "Ed Bearss has what might be best called a battlefield voice, a kind of booming growl, like an ancient way-cylinder record amplified to full volume – about the way you'd imagine William Tecumseh Sherman sounded the day he burned Atlanta, with a touch of Teddy Roosevelt charging up San Juan Hill."

Ed was not afraid to lead a group anywhere or in any weather. On one of our early fieldtrips to Vicksburg, Ed led a car caravan to Bruinsburg down the riverbank on a dirt road to the landing site of Grant's army. Unfortunately, the ground was wet and cars became stuck in the mud and had to be towed out. There was also a story of Ed leading a tour group on a bus to visit the Richard Garrett's Farm near Port Royal, Virginia, where Booth was killed. The site is in the median of a divided highway and the turnaround was congested with trees and underbrush and the bus got stuck.

Ed Bearss was an inspiration and mentor to countless students of the Civil War. *The New York Times* described Ed Bearss as a "national treasure, legendary historian, and gifted storyteller." *The Washington Post* said, "Ed's glory is not in the recitation of the facts of a battle. Rather it's the personal details of the lives of the men who fought it."

Jim Lighthizer, past-president of the American Battlefield Trust noted, "For many of us, our love of history and preservation was nurtured through battlefield tours led by Ed and his appearance on Ken Burns' series *The Civil War*. His knowledge of history was encyclopedic – and his ability to convey that knowledge in a relatable way, mesmerized his audiences for generations." And historian James M. McPherson added, "As anyone who has been on a tour with Ed is aware, he knows everything – and I literally mean everything – about the Civil War battles and a great many other areas of history as well."

Ed received many honorary degrees and was honorarily named a Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide. With advancing years Ed finally showed signs of aging. He grew hard of hearing and there were signs of forgetfulness. With Margie's passing and some family still in Brandon, Mississippi, Ed moved there. It was a sad, stormy day on September 15, 2020 when Ed drew his last breath with his family surrounding him. He is buried in Bethel Cemetery in Brandon, Mississippi. He is greatly missed.

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Editors of Emerging Civil War, www.Emerging Civil War.com, Blog, September 16, 2020 Emerging Civil War

The author would like to thank David Carrino for his help finding articles about Ed's visits to our Round Table and to Mike Wells for his encouragement to write this piece.

FINIS!