

# THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER

PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

www.pscwrt.org

**NOVEMBER 2021**

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**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, NOVEMBER 11, 2021**

**ZOOM MEETING ONLY**

**Time:** Social hour at 6:45 p.m.; Program at 7:00 p.m.

**RICHARD HEISLER ON UNION VETERANS FROM INDIANA COUNTY  
PENNSYLVANIA WHO SETTLED IN BOTHELL**

Richard Heisler will give a presentation on the Indiana County Pennsylvania veterans that made up the nucleus of the early Bothell pioneers. There are many aspects to them as a group that made them unique among the thousands of area veterans of the Civil War. Richard Heisler will discuss the leadup to war in their Pennsylvania community, detail their diverse wartime histories and then talk a lot about their lives in Bothell in the decades that followed. In addition Richard Heisler will give a brief context and background on veterans in the Seattle/King County area in general and some other Bothell veterans.

## Important dispatches

### PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE AND COVID 19

When I became President of PSCWRT for the third time in May 2020 my number one concern was for PSCWRT to continue as a viable place where the American Civil War could be studied and discussed in a safe manner by our membership until the Pandemic ended. Thanks to our past president, Dick Miller, we started having Zoom Meetings instead of scheduled live in person meetings. This proved to work well and was getting about half of the amount of attendance before the Pandemic. If you attended some of these Zoom Meetings, you know that the presentations were excellent. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Membership of PSCWRT I wish to express our eternal gratitude to Dick Miller for helping to keep our Roundtable alive and vibrant.

The Board still feels that at present it is still too early to have in person Live meetings at the China Harbor. While the Covid rates have peaked and have started to drop, they are still very high, but they seem to be coming down. It was decided that only who are fully vaccinated could attend our meetings. This would be on the Honor System. Also, it was decided that attendees of these in person meetings would be required to wear masks except when eating or drinking. At this point in time it is logistically impossible for there to be a simultaneous in person and Zoom meeting. The Board will vote again shortly before Thanksgiving as to whether or not to have a live in person meeting starting on Dec. 9 when Robert May is to be our presenter.

**The Pandemic will be monitored by the Board of Directors. It is our sincere hope that we will be able to hold our in person meeting at the China Harbor on December 9. Stay tuned! Rick Solomon**

### **SPEAKER SCHEDULE FOR 2021-2022**

**December 9, 2021 – Retired professor and PSCWRT member Bob May will take up the subject of filibustering, a subject he covered in his first book, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire***

**January 13, 2022 – Richard Hanks spoke to the roundtable in 2017 on Edward Hall Higby. He will return to speak about the Lincoln-Hanks connection. Hanks is a distant relative of Nancy Hanks.**

**February 10, 2022 – Long-time PSCWRT favorite, Ethan Rafuse, author of numerous books on the Civil War and Professor of Military History at the US Army Command & General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, will again delight roundtable members with his incisive analysis of Civil War battles and leaders.**

**March 10, 2022 – Ryan Booth will talk about James Sanks Brisbin, a lawyer who enlisted as a private in April 1861 and ended the war as a brevet brigadier general. In the course of seeing significant action, Brisbin was wounded five times.**

**April 7, 2022 – Gordon Chang, author of *Ghosts of Gold Mountain: The Epic Story of the Chinese Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad*, is the Olive H. Palmer Professor in Humanities at Stanford University.**

**May 12, 2022 – Caroline Janney is the John L. Nau III Professor in the History of the American Civil War and the Director of the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at the University of Virginia. Professor Janney's latest book, *Ends of War: The Unfinished Fight of Lee's Army after Appomattox*, will be released by the University of North Carolina Press on September 21, 2021.**

### **NOVEMBER Birthdays**

Several members have birthdays in November and we'd like to acknowledge their special day! They are:

Keith Clark  
Peter Fitzgerald  
Douglas  
Galuszka  
Fred Hahn  
Garth Holmes  
Tom Keller  
George Yocum

## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: THE UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH FOR A COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE PART TWO**

Last month I gave a brief history of the high command in the Western Theater up until seven promotions were made up to the newly created rank of Lieutenant General October 11-13, 1862, days after the Battle of Perryville. On December 10, 1862 Jefferson Davis made his first visit to the Army of Tennessee due to expressed uneasiness at the command of that army by Braxton Bragg. President Davis had few options with the other five full generals in the Confederacy. Robert E. Lee was unwilling to serve anywhere except at the command of the army of Northern Virginia. Samuel Cooper was strictly a desk general. Albert Sidney Johnston had been killed on the first day of the Battle of Shiloh. PGT Beauregard was in Jeff Davis's doghouse deeper than the others for taking an unexcused absence from the Army in June 1862. Finally, Joseph E. Johnston had been appointed to the command of the entire Western on 11-24-62, but was not physically able to assume active field command.

Davis's only real option was to appoint one of the seven newly minted Lieutenant generals to replace Braxton Bragg. Were any of them ready for Army command at this point? The answer, in my opinion, was no with the possible exception of Kirby Smith. Let's take a quick look at these seven.

Two of them were corps commanders from the Army of Northern Virginia, James Longstreet and Stonewall Jackson. Longstreet, Lee's "Warhorse", at this point was a very solid corps commander. Lee almost always traveled with Longstreet. Perhaps in the future Longstreet could develop into an army commander, but not at this point and Marse Robert was loathe to let Old Pete serve elsewhere. On the other hand Jackson had shown a knack for independent command

especially at the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1862, the Second Bull run campaign and the capture of Harpers Ferry. However, Jackson had shown a propensity of clashing with his chief subordinates such as W. W. Loring, Richard Garnett, and, especially, A.P. Hill. This inability to get along with some talented subordinates did not augur well for Jackson having an army command.

The two corps commanders of the Army of Tennessee also were not ready for army command. In my opinion, Leonidas Polk was one of the worst generals the South had. What Polk did have going for him was the personal friendship of the chief executive of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. This friendship stretched all the way back to West Point in the 1820s when Polk had tutored Davis in several subjects. Besides being a general who did not follow orders and was a poor tactician, Polk was one of the main intriguers against Bragg. William Hardee was a solid corps commander, but nothing more than that.

That leaves three other lieutenant generals. Theophilus Holmes was a personal friend and classmate of Davis's at West Point. He was deaf and had performed slowly during the Seven Days Campaign. Lee did not want Holmes who was quietly kicked up to the command of the Trans-Mississippi Department, only to resign in less than a year. His replacement in command of the Trans-Mississippi, E. Kirby Smith, had shown some talent both at First Bull Run and during the Invasion of Kentucky. After Perryville Smith refused to serve with Bragg in command any longer. Perhaps Davis should've replaced Bragg with Kirby Smith. The last of the freshly minted lieutenant generals, John C. Pemberton, was, perhaps the worst general of all of them. A West Pointer, Pemberton had married a Virginia woman and went South upon the secession of Virginia. He was given command of Vicksburg, "the Gibraltar of the Confederacy". He was now a classic victim of the Peter Principle, having risen to the level of his own incompetence.

In summary, at the time of his December visit to the Army of Tennessee the only viable candidate to replace Bragg at the head of that Army was E. Kirby Smith. How Stones River and subsequent campaigns would have turned out with Smith in command of the Army of Tennessee is anybody's guess. Next month an analysis of Davis's options when he made his second visit to the Army of Tennessee shortly after the Battle of Chickamauga.

### **USS *Gettysburg* (1864-1879).**

**Previously the civilian steamship *Douglas* (1858-1863) and the blockade runner *Margaret and Jessie* (1863)**

The 726-ton (burden) iron side-wheel steamship *Douglas* was built at Glasgow, Scotland, in 1858 for employment as an Isle of Man packet. Purchased by Confederate interests in November 1862, she soon began a remarkable career as a blockade runner. *Douglas* arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, in late January 1863 on her first voyage through the Federal blockade. She was renamed *Margaret and Jessie* shortly afterwards. During the next nine months, she made eight more runs into Southern ports, five to Charleston and three to Wilmington, North Carolina. While attempting another passage to Wilmington, she was captured by USS *Nansemond* and the U.S. Army transport *Fulton* on 5 November 1863.

Later in the month, the erstwhile blockade runner was purchased by the U.S. Navy. She was converted to a gunboat and commissioned as USS *Gettysburg* in early May 1864. Sent back to the scene of her earlier exploits, she now began to enforce the North's blockade of the South and was involved in the capture of three steamers during the rest of the year: *Little Ada* (9 July), *Lilian* (24 August) and [\*Armstrong\*](#) (4 December). Later in December 1864 and in mid-January 1865, *Gettysburg* took part in the two attacks that finally captured Fort Fisher, guardian of the entrance to the port of Wilmington. In addition to shelling the fort, during the January attack she put ashore a landing party of crewmen, who suffered serious casualties while attempting to force their way into the fortress. *Gettysburg* subsequently was used as a transport along the Atlantic Coast until decommissioned in June 1865.

*Gettysburg* recommissioned in December 1866 for a brief visit to the Caribbean, but went out of service at the beginning of March 1867. A year later she was reactivated

and sent to the Caribbean area to conduct scientific work and protect American interests. She was again out of commission between October 1869 and November 1873. Her next period of active duty included transport duty along the Atlantic coast, punctuated by service in February-May 1874 supporting a survey of possible inter-oceanic canal routes across Central America.

Laid up again during April-September 1875, *Gettysburg* was assigned to carry out navigational surveys in the West Indies during late 1875 and the first several months of 1876. Following shipyard work, in October 1876 she went to the Mediterranean Sea for more survey duty. *Gettysburg* remained in the "middle sea" for the rest of her Navy career. She was decommissioned and sold at Genoa, Italy, in May 1879.

**This page features all the views we have related to USS *Gettysburg* (1864-1879).**

## **REPORT ON THE CIVIL WAR ARTILLERY SEMINAR HELD BY CHAMBERSBURG CIVIL WAR SEMINARS**

Since March 2020 the pandemic has had a big effect on our lives. I had a 24 day trip to Vietnam and Cambodia scheduled for February-March 2021 postponed by Covid 19. I reset my Southeast Asian trip for October-November, but, alas, it was postponed again by the Coronavirus. After my disappointment I got my act together and signed up for the Civil War Artillery Seminar being offered by Chambersburg Civil War Seminars October 21-24. After visiting with family and friends in my native state of New Jersey I drove out in a rental car to the Hampton Inn in Chambersburg where the Seminar was being held. I had attended four previous seminars with this Chambersburg group between 2008 and 2013. All of these previous programs had Ed Bearss, "the Rock Star of Civil War Battlefield Tour Guides" and Ted Alexander leading the way. These programs were top notch especially 2008 when we followed the Iron Brigade to Brawner's Farm, South Mountain, Antietam and Gettysburg. In the last couple of years both Ted Alexander and Ed Bearss have "struck the Tent".

Eric Wittenberg, an attorney who lives in Columbus, Ohio, has taken over the reins of Chambersburg Civil War Seminars, with energy, imagination and connections to other Civil War historians. Eric has written over twenty Civil War books focusing mainly on Union cavalry in the Eastern Theater. Of the three main branches of a Civil War Army, Artillery was probably my weakest area. This was a great opportunity for me to bone up on this branch. The first day we rode our bus out to the Antietam Battlefield in Maryland in less than an hour, It was a gorgeous Indian Summer day. We were joined by Dr. Tom Clemens, one of the foremost battlefield guides for Antietam. I had been to Antietam perhaps six times before. We were going

to artillery sites, about half of which I and most of the 60 participants had never been to before. Along the way we learned about the different artillery field pieces. In both armies the most common cannon was the twelve pound Napoleon, a smoothbore. The second most common field piece for both armies was the 3 Inch Ordinance Rifle. We learned about the differences between solid shell, case shot, shrapnel and canister. We were shown how caissons and limbers operated. What made up a gun crew, a section and a battery. We learned about the differences as to how the artillery was organized in the Army of Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia.

The second day we had six lectures in the morning, afternoon and evening with a barbecue taking place in the evening. Craig Swain gave a history of Artillery leading up to the Civil War. Eric Wittenberg focused on both sides Horse Artillery including stories on John Pelham and Robert Beckham from the South and John Calef and Robert Williston from the North. Steve Phan gave an excellent talk on Heavy Artillery regiments in the Civil War. Chris Stowe gave an informative talk on the evolving role of field artillery in Western Warfare in the Nineteenth Century. David Powell, author of the recent 3 volume set of books on the Chickamauga campaign, gave a superb presentation on the tactical effect of massed fire on three Western Theater battlefields: Ruggles at Shiloh, Mendenhall at Stones River and Semple at Chickamauga. Finally, licensed Gettysburg battlefield guide, Jessie Wheedleton, told stories of different individual artillerists at the Battle of Gettysburg.

The third day we went on a tour of the artillery on the Second Day at the Battle of Gettysburg. We were led by two licensed Gettysburg Battlefield tour guides: Jim Hessler, who has written a superb book on the Battle at the Peach Orchard, and David Shultz, who wrote a book entitled "Double Cannister at Pickett's Charge". In addition to those two experts we were joined on this day by Eric Wittenberg and David Powell. That's four experts all at once. The focus was on Sickles Third Corps being attacked by Longstreet's divisions of McLaws and Hood and the Union's reinforcements of the shattered Third Corps. Of particular interest was going to the top of Little Round Top and being shown by Jim Hessler and David Shultz that only Hazlet's six gun battery could fit on top firing in a westerly direction towards Houck's Ridge, Devil's Den, the Valley of Death and the Slaughter Pen. They also explained that had the South taken Little Round Top they would have been able to use only two cannon firing north at the Federal line on Cemetery Ridge.

The fourth day was a morning only Horse Artillery tour led by Eric Wittenberg and Larry Korczyk, a licensed Gettysburg battlefield tour guide. At McPherson's Ridge we were shown how Calef's 6 gun battery of 3 inch Ordinance Rifles held off Heth's and Pender's divisions of AP Hill's Third Corps the morning of the first day of Gettysburg. Later we went to the East and South Cavalry Fields which were the scene of fighting on day three of Gettysburg.

Next year Chambersburg Civil War Seminars has three tours scheduled. The first in the Spring, at a date yet to be set, is a Trifecta of wars in New Orleans. Besides the Confederate Museum other Crescent City Civil War sites will be visited. New Orleans has the National World War II Museum and the Chalmette Plantation is the site of the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812. In the summer of 2022 a five day intensive tour of the Chancellorsville Campaign is being held. In October 2022 a Cavalry in the Civil War Seminar is being led by Eric Wittenberg with

visits to cavalry action sites at Gettysburg and a full day at Brandy Station, where the largest cavalry battle in the history of the Western Hemisphere was fought. Finally, a Virtual One Day Conference on Leaders and Leadership in the Civil War is being held on Saturday, February 19 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. EST via Zoom. Featured speakers and talks: Chris Mackowski: Stonewall Jackson's Arresting Leadership Style; Gordon Rhea: Jeb Stuart: The Man Behind the Mask; David Powell: William S. Rosecrans and the Spirit of Innovation in 1863; Zachery Fry: Martinets and McClellanites: Regulars, Volunteers, and Leadership Challenges in the Union Army; and Jennifer Murray: General Meade's Maturation of Command, 1861-1863. This virtual one day conference costs only \$75/member and \$80/non-member.

## **OFFICER AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS POSITIONS NEED TO BE FILLED**

### **GREETERS**

We need motivated people who are outgoing who would be willing to meet and help visitors and new members, to answer questions and help them feel welcome to our group. This is currently a non-board position, but for this position "the more, the merrier". Everyone here was new at some point. Didn't you like being welcomed rather than ignored?

### **SECRETARY**

The main job of the Secretary is to take minutes at board meetings and to publish them for the board, the advisors and the general membership.

### **VICE-PRESIDENT RESERVATIONS**

This is the person that records the meal choices and reservations for each month's meeting as they come in. Once live in person meetings resume at the China Harbor we need someone regular in that position. Vice President-Successor Jim Dimond has stepped in temporarily.

### **VICE-PRESIDENT EDITOR**

This monthly newsletter, the Washington Volunteer, is edited and put together by the VP-Editor. The opening is immediate with Rick Solomon filling this position temporarily. Right now I have my plate overflowing with serving as President and trying to find speakers for 2022-2023. This is one of the most important positions in PSCWRT. If you volunteer, you can call on past Newsletter Editors Jeff Rombauer, Mark Terry and Rick Solomon for advise.

**Please note that anyone who volunteers will be given help and instruction for their role. For the most efficient and smooth operation of the PSCWRT, we need YOUR HELP to make it happen!**

### **DUES & DONATIONS**

The PSCWRT season goes from September to the following May. Dues should be paid in September. Dues are payable either at the meeting or by mail: \$25 per individual or for a couple. Also, donations are gratefully accepted. These will help secure speakers for our meetings. Please note that all donations are

tax deductible as the PSCWRT is a 501(c)3 organization. Mail to: Chris McDonald, Treasurer, 34705 NE 14th Avenue, LaCenter, WA 98629. Call (503) 930-4940 or email: [alpacamomchris@gmail.com](mailto:alpacamomchris@gmail.com)

**We welcome your article or research submissions for the newsletter, but they may be edited for space. Note that the contents of each newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the PSCWRT. The deadline for the November 2021 Washington Volunteer is Monday, November 1, 2021. Please have it in Rick Solomon's hands via email or snailmail by then. Thank you!**

## **2021-2022 OFFICERS**

### **Elected:\***

President: Rick Solomon; [ricksolomon192@gmail.com](mailto:ricksolomon192@gmail.com)

Vice President Successor: Jim Dimond; [shinodad@gmail.com](mailto:shinodad@gmail.com)

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Secretary: VACANT

Board Member: George Yocum;

*\*All, except for Past President, an automatic position.*