

THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER

PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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MARCH 2022

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NEXT MEETING: Wednesday,

MARCH 9, 2022

ZOOM MEETING ONLY

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

RYAN BOOTH WILL SPEAK ON BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES BRISBIN

Ryan Booth, Professor of History at Washington State University, will give the March Zoom presentation on James Sands Brisbin, a lawyer who enlisted as a private in 1861 and ended the civil war as a brevet brigadier general. He saw action at First Bull Run, the Peninsula campaign and the Red River Expedition. Brisbin was wounded five times.

ADDITIONAL READING ON THIS MONTH'S PRESENTATION

This month's topic concerns a little known but gallant Union officer of the Civil War, James Sanks Brisbin. Born in Pennsylvania in 1837, Brisbin had a varied career before the Civil War as a teacher, newspaper owner and finally a Lawyer. When the war broke out, in 1861 he enlisted as a private, but soon was appointed as a 2nd lieutenant in the 1st dragoons [1st regiment U. S. Regular Cavalry] and was wounded at the battle of First Manassas. Later Brisbin served as a captain in the 6th U.S. Cavalry and eventually as Colonel of the 5th U.S. C.T. Cavalry. Wounded 5 times during the war James Brisbin served for 25 more years in the army as an officer in various Cavalry regiments in the Northwest. He participated in the campaign in 1876 against the Sioux as a commander of the 2nd U.S. Cavalry detachment under General Terry which saw George Armstrong Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn. An author of numerous articles and books, including campaign biographies of Ulysses S. Grant and James Garfield and many articles on the west, he wrote little about his Civil War experiences. Brisbin died in Philadelphia January 14th, 1892.

For additional information, the following books are recommended.

NEWELL, CLAYTON R. & SHRADER, CHARLES R. On Duty Well and Faithfully Done: A History of the Regular Army in the Civil War. Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 2011. Pp. xvii, 381. A basic summary of the role of the U.S. Regulars during the Civil War. Chapter 11 covers the history of the U.S. Regular cavalry.

SEARS, RICHARD D. Camp Nelson Kentucky: A Civil War History. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 2002. Pp. lxxxiii, 401. Camp Nelson was an important supply depot and recruiting center in central Kentucky. It was here that Brisbin recruited and organized the 5th U.S. C.T. Cavalry. After a short historical introduction chapter, most of the book consists of numerous documents concerning the military post.

CAUGHEY, DONALD C & JONES, JIMMY J. The 6th United States Cavalry in the Civil War: A History and Roster. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Ltd. 2013. Pp. x, 277. The only U.S. regular cavalry regiment organized during the war, Brisbin served as Captain of Co. L until he left to become Colonel of the 5th U.S.C.T. The only history of the regiment devoted solely to its role during the Civil War.

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.

With the rise of the highly contagious Omicron Variant the Board still feels that at present it is still too early to have in person meetings at the China Harbor. Covid rates are continuing to drop in the Greater Puget Sound area but are still way too high. No one really knows whether there will be more variants and , if so, whether they will be more contagious than Omnicron and more severe in its effect. It was decided that only who are fully vaccinated could attend our meetings. Also, it was decided that attendees of these in person meetings would be required to wear masks except when eating or drinking. In a second vote the Board of Directors has unanimously decided that members can attend live meeting if they are unvaccinated and provide a Covid 19 negative test result that is less than 72 hours before our meeting. At this point in time it is logistically impossible for there to be a simultaneous in person and Zoom meeting. The China Harbor has been reopened closed after the discovery of structural damage to it's building. The Board has voted to continue to have no live meetings, but have

Zoom Meetings in March and April 2022. It is our hope to have a live meeting at the China Harbor on May 12. There is a possibility that we could have our annual Auction Night on that date, an event we have not had since the Spring of 2019.. Stay tuned!
Rick Solomon

SPEAKER SCHEDULE FOR 2021-2022

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.

MARCH Birthdays

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

Ken Bertrand
Barbara Hemmingsen
Michael Kirschner
Marty Wingate

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: THE UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH FOR A COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE PART SIX

Last month I discussed the High Command of the Army of Tennessee from the Battle of Chattanooga through the period shortly before Joe Johnston was relieved of command. In this column I shall cover the Army of Tennessee through the before Sherman's March to the Sea.

Hardee had been offered command of the Army of Tennessee in December 1863 when he was acting commander after Bragg's resignation. Later in mid-July 1864 Bragg was sent to Atlanta with the authority to relieve Johnston & replace him with either Hardee or Hood. Bragg compared Hardee to Johnston as "retiring" & Hood as more aggressive. Bragg blamed Hardee as one of the officers who conspired against Bragg.

On 7-12-64 Davis telegraphed Lee asking him his opinion of Hood. Lee replied, "It is a bad time to release the commander of an army situated as that of Tennessee. We may

lose Atlanta & the army too. Hood is a bold fighter. I am doubtful as to other qualities necessary." Later that evening Lee wrote to Davis,"It is a grievous thing to change commander of an army situated as is that of the Tennessee. Still if necessary it ought to be done. I know nothing of the necessity....Hood is a bold fighter, very industrious on the battlefield, careless off, & I have had no opportunity of judging his action, when the whole responsibility rested upon him. I have a high opinion of his gallantry, earnestness & zeal. General Hardee has more experience in managing an army." On 7-17-64 Johnson was relieved of the Army of Tennessee's command and Hood was promoted over his superior Hardee.

This created an opening for the command of Hood's old corps. Ordinarily, this post would be given, at least temporarily to the senior division commander of that corps, but Hood was of the belief that none of them was suited for the position. Hood asked Hardee to recommend someone from Hardee's Corps. Hardee named Cheatham! For about ten days (during Hood's first two sorties of Peachtree Creek and Bald Hill) Cheatham served as acting corps commander. Then on 7-27-64 Lt. General Stephen D. Lee was transferred from his command of the Department of Mississippi and put in charge of Hood's old corps in time for Ezra Church. Stephen D. Lee was USMA 1854. He was Beauregard's ADC at Fort Sumter. Lee was an artillery officer who had fought in most of the Army of Northern Virginia's battles in 1862, particularly distinguishing himself during Second Bull Run and by the Dunkard Church at Antietam. He was a brigade commander under Pemberton during the Vicksburg Campaign. After being exchanged a month after the surrender of Vicksburg he was promoted Major General and put in command of all cavalry in Mississippi.

On 9-14-64 General Samuel French had written Davis warning him of the low morale in the army, especially among general officers. Davis, accompanied by two of his aides, arrived at Palmetto on 9-25-64, and, for the supposedly good political effect. General Howell Cobb of Georgia. & Gov. Harris of Tennessee visited the army at the same time. There were speeches galore by all the statesmen, but the soldiers in the ranks knew that the time had passed for speeches, & they were little affected. President Davis, accompanied by Hood, rode along the lines for an informal review of the troops – an event which was marred by some uncouth cries from the ranks of "Give us back Gen. Johnston." This made no visible impression on Davis, but it must have been painful, if not surprising, to Hood. Davis simply could not admit that in two months time he had made a mistake in having Johnston removed.

Davis conferred with Hood, Hardee, Stewart, S.D. Lee, Cheatham & other division commanders. Hardee told Davis that Hood had consistently advocated retreat when under Johnston. Hardee, Stewart & Cheatham all thought either Johnston or Beauregard should replace Hood. Hardee insisted that either he or Hood had to go. Hood blamed Hardee for the failed attacks around Atlanta & said either Richard Taylor or Cheatham should replace Hardee. Hardee, Stewart & SD Lee all suggested either Johnston or Beauregard to take command. In the end Hardee was transferred to take command of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia & Florida. In the meantime

Beauregard was growing to be increasingly unhappy under the command of R.E. Lee. Since Davis was on bad terms with the Napoleon in Gray, he had Lee feel out Beauregard about being transferred out West. To this Beauregard readily agreed. Davis made him commander of the Dept. of the West, a supervisory position of Richard Taylor & Hood that was similar in capacity to that of Joseph Johnston in 1862-3. Both were done partially for political reasons with Johnston or Beauregard having little actual authority. Davis supported Hood causing Hardee to leave the Army of Tennessee. Once again Cleburne was passed over with Cheatham getting the command. However, Cheatham was not promoted to Lt. General since he was second in seniority of major generals in the Army of Tennessee with only the incompetent W.W. Loring being senior to him.

Davis and Hood agreed that Hood should move north & cut Sherman's line of communication. Davis got Hood to agree that he would follow Sherman if Sherman moved toward the ocean. Davis made a number of speeches including one in Augusta in which he stated that the army would soon be in Middle Tennessee. He also publically attacked Johnston & Gov. Joseph Brown of Georgia. This was reported in Augusta and Macon newspapers & was read by William T. Sherman who reported this information to Wash. DC. Therefore Sherman was not surprised when the Army of Tennessee advanced into Middle Tennessee the next month.

OFFICERS 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

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 April 2022 Washington Volunteer is Monday, March 28, 2022. Please have it in Rick Solomon's hands via email or snailmail by then. Thank you!

2021-2022 OFFICERS

President: Rick Solomon; ricksolomon192@gmail.com

Vice President Successor: Jim Dimond; shinodad@gmail.com

Past President: Jeff Rombauer; jeffrombauer@foxinternet.org

Co-Vice President Programs: Pat Brady; patsbrady@comcast.net; Dick Miller; milomiller882@msn.com; Rick Solomon; ricksolomon192@gmail.com

Acting Newsletter Editor Temporary): Rick Solomon; ricksolomon192@gmail.com

Vice President Marketing: Dave Otis; jbhood81@aol.com

Vice President Membership: Arthur Banner; banneras@comcast.net

Acting Vice President Reservations: Jim Dimond; shinoded@gmail.com

Acting Vice President Social Media: Jim Dimond; shinodad@gmail.com

Treasurer: Chris McDonald; alpacamomchris@gmail.com

Secretary: VACANT

Board Member: George Yocum;