

THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER

PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

www.pscwrt.org

APRIL 2022

Volume 37, Issue 8

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday,
APRIL 7, 2022**

ZOOM MEETING ONLY

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

GORDON CHANG WILL SPEAK ON THE CHINESE WHO BUILT THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

Gordon Chang, author of *Ghost of Gold Mountain: The Epic Story of the Chinese who built the Transcontinental Railroad*, will give the April Zoom presentation on the topic of the aforementioned book.

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 Meeting in 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

May 12, 2022 – Richard Hanks spoke to the Puget Sound Civil War Roundtable in 2017 on Edward Hall Higby. He will return to speak about the Lincoln-Hanks connection. Richard Hanks is a distant relative of Nancy Hanks who was the mother of Abraham Lincoln. She died when Honest Abe was nine years old.

MARCH Birthdays

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

Terrence George Brown
Jolene Coulton
Ed Malles
Stephen Pierce
Jay Rusling
Rick Solomon
Kim Terry

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

Last month I discussed the High Command of the Army of Tennessee while Joe Johnston was in command of the Army of Tennessee for the first time. In this column I shall cover the Army of Tennessee from October 1864 through January 1865 when John Bell Hood was relieved of command.

At first Hood tried to lure Sherman to follow him into Tennessee. Sherman followed for awhile, but eventually stopped and turned around to Atlanta. In the meantime Sherman sent George Thomas north to organize the defense of Nashville. From October 26 until November 19, 1864 Hood stayed put around Decatur, Alabama. Then Hood ordered the Army of Tennessee north in a race to beat Schofield's Union troops to Nashville. In the meantime, on November 15 Sherman started south from Atlanta on his famous March to the Sea. While Stephen D. Lee's corps kept up a show of activity at Columbia, Tennessee, to hold the Schofield's Federals in position, Hood was attempting with Stewart's and Cheatham's corps to get behind Schofield at Spring Hill. Even though Cheatham's corps got to Spring Hill first the Confederates failed to block the road north. The evening of November 29 the entire Army commanded by Schofield marched past the Confederates by using that road. It is still a mystery who to blame in the Confederate high command for allowing Schofield's men to escape. Hood accused Cheatham of failing to carry out instructions to block the road and requested Richmond to replace Cheatham, but the next day withdrew the request. Cheatham claims not to have been given specific orders. In any event only Cleburne's division attacked, but it was not successful. Many Civil War Historians have blamed numerous generals for the Spring Hill debacle. Fingers have been pointed at Hood, Cheatham, S. D. Lee, Cleburne, Forrest and others. I think what happened with the Army of Tennessee at this point in the Civil War was a classic case of the Peter Principle En Masse with the high command of the Army of Tennessee. Two fine division commanders had risen to the level of their incompetency, namely Hood and Cheatham. As army commander Hood was two levels into his incompetency. Forrest, an unmatched raider, was not well suited to be the cavalry commander of an entire army.

The next day, November 30, 1864, Hood ordered a frontal attack upon the Union line by two-thirds of his army across an open plain that was longer than Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. This resulted in the deaths of five Rebel brigade

commanders (John Adams, Otto Strahl, Hiram Granbury, States Rights Gist, John Carter and the finest division commander in the army, Patrick Cleburne. Five other Confederate generals were wounded. Fifty-five regimental commanders were killed, wounded or captured. The army of Tennessee suffered over 6,000 casualties. But did Hood retreat? No, he kept the army pressing forward to the outskirts of Nashville where the Rebels were outnumbered two to one. On December 15-16 Thomas and his Northern Army smashed the army of Tennessee to bits with three Confederate generals being captured along with almost 5,000 gray soldiers. Also captured was 53 Rebel cannon. As the broken Army of Tennessee retreated they sang a tune that was an old favorite, *The Yellow Rose of Texas*, but the words were changed by some camp wit:

“So now I’m marching southward;
My heart is full of woe,
I’m going back to Georgia
To see my Uncle Joe.
You may talk about your Beauregard
And sing of General Lee,
But the gallant Hood of Texas
Played hell in Tennessee.”

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 advice.

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!

<p>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</p>

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 May 2022 Washington Volunteer is Monday, May 2, 2022. Please have it in Rick Solomon's hands via email or snailmail by then. Thank you!

2021-2022 OFFICERS

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