



THE drum roll

Volume 33 321st Regular Meeting
Number 10 June 5, 2015

Dramatic scenes played out at sea

Friday, June 5, 2015, 6:00 p.m.

Concorde Banquets
20922 North Rand Road, Kildeer, Illinois

The Naval War in 1864



Chris Kolakowski

Although the American Civil War had a significant naval dimension, it was a conflict primarily between two land forces. Mass armies, you see, are relatively easy to raise — at least compared to navies. And though the United States Navy was not an inconsiderable force in 1861, the fledgling Confederate Navy existed only in theory. Couple this with the fact that the Confederacy's industrial capacity was much smaller than the Union's, and there is no getting around the fact that any naval war would be a very lopsided struggle.

Lopsided, yes, but not non-existent. The South proved ingenious at cobbling together a naval force, and though it never matched the Federal power afloat, the Confederate Navy proved surprisingly resilient. From commerce raiding to port defense, and above all in producing ironclads,

Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory demonstrated a true genius for improvisation.

And as for the North, there is no question that naval power, both seagoing and riverine, provided huge force multipliers for Federal land forces. Union vessels strangled Southern logistics via the blockade, while at the same time augmenting Union logistics and granting Union access to the deep South.

1864 was the pivotal year of the war. The two dominant campaigns were those of Grant, against Lee's army and Richmond, and of Sherman, against Joe Johnston and Atlanta. History's focus has not neglected these engagements. However, crucial events happening at sea have garnered much less attention from historians. Some of the most dramatic scenes of the entire war played out at sea or along the southern coasts. The action was far flung: in Albemarle Sound, off the coast of Cherbourg, France, and at Mobile Bay.

I am pleased to invite everyone to come hear Chris Kolakowski speak on this subject at the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table's end-of-year banquet on June 5. I was fortunate enough to see him present this talk at a symposium last summer, and when I did I knew immediately that I had to have him present it to us. He is a rising star in the public history and Civil War communities. He is a former director of the Patton Museum at Fort Knox, is active in preservation of the Perryville Battlefield, and is currently the director of the General Douglas McArthur Memorial Museum in Norfolk, Virginia. He is the author of *The Civil War at Perryville* and *The Stones River and Tullahoma Campaigns*.

Please have reservations to Tom DeFranco by May 29, along with a check for \$39 for each dinner reservation. — *Dave Powell*

Send banquet reservations to Tom DeFranco by May 29, 2015

The Man Who Precipitated the Battle of Gettysburg

By Tom DeFranco

On May 1, noted author, historian, and cavalry expert Eric Wittenberg presented the story of John Buford and the way he precipitated the battle of Gettysburg.

The Bufords (originally the Beauforts) were a French Huguenot family with a history of military service through the ages. They could trace their genealogy to the 1066 Battle of Hastings as part of William the Conqueror's invading forces. Upon the family's emigration to the New World, they remained as active in military affairs of their adopted country as they were in the old. John Buford's uncle, Thomas, was killed in Lord Dunsmore's War, which was fought on the eve of the American Revolution, and his father, Simeon, served in the Revolution as a quartermaster in the Culpeper Minutemen, a Virginia militia unit.

After the Revolution, the Bufords moved to Kentucky and became known for their knowledge of horseflesh. The family also was steeped in Democratic politics of the time. Besides an older half brother, Napoleon Bonaparte Buford, John had two younger full brothers, James Monroe Buford and Thomas Jefferson Buford. Part of the family moved to Rock Island, Illinois. John had a sense at an early age that he was cut out for the saddle.

He wanted to attend West Point when he came of age, but a problem arose because Napoleon was already attending classes there. Eventually, claiming exemption for being half brothers, John was accepted into West Point. In the antebellum army he served as a lieutenant (and later captain) of the 2nd Dragoons. As civil war approached, Buford received a letter from the pro-Confederate governor of Kentucky offering him anything he wanted in the military service of Kentucky. He replied that he was a "captain of the United States Army and he intended to remain one."

Up until the Gettysburg Campaign, Buford's only combat assignment had been during the 2nd Manassas Campaign. He had the intelligence coup of the campaign when he discovered General

James Longstreet's column passing through Thoroughfare Gap. He quickly relayed this intelligence to General Irvin McDowell (then acting as General John Pope's second in command). Unfortunately, McDowell did not act quickly enough to defend the gap and Longstreet was able to link up with General Stonewall Jackson. Federal forces at Bull Run were routed from the field.

The next time Buford found himself in the saddle was in the spring of 1863 when he commanded the reserve brigade of regular cavalry. Changes occurred within the cavalry command structure when a bad case of piles kept cavalry corps commander General George Stoneman from the saddle. The first division commander, General Alfred Pleasonton, now commanded the corps, and Buford took command of the division.

At the time of Gettysburg, Buford's division comprised William Gamble's brigade (which included veteran units such as the Fox River Valley's own 8th Illinois), Tom Devin's brigade, and Wesley Merritt's reserve brigade (inherited from Buford when the latter rose in command). Unfortunately, Merritt's regulars were on detached duty and not available to him. The cavalry was split into three prongs, each operating in the van of a wing of the Army of the Potomac.

Buford's forces covered the army's left wing commanded by a consistently aggressive corps commander, John Reynolds. Buford maintained contact with his superiors. The leading Confederate elements, perhaps from a sense of arrogance, were not quite as concerned by enemy presence. The Confederates knew that they had Yankees in front of them, too — after a fashion. Pettigrew's brigade of Heth's Division had been in town on June 30 and had seen what they took to be Federal cavalry. Unfortunately for them, neither Henry Heth nor Hill was inclined to believe the new brigade commander and assumed all that was in town was some local militia, which would be easily swept away with a slight show of force.

They would receive an education on July 1. Reports told Buford that A. P. Hill's and Richard Ewell's corps were lurking from the west and north of Gettysburg. The closest Rebel forces were Henry Heth's new division of Hill's Third Corps. This was a key point in Wittenberg's presentation. Rather than it being an accident that the two armies would meet at Gettysburg (as claimed by so many historians), Wittenberg holds that both armies were likely to meet there because of the terrain and the road network. Buford's decision to hold there made a likelihood a certainty.

Realizing that July 1 would be fraught with peril, Buford did his best to give his men the strongest chance for survival. He realized he would be badly outnumbered. He used the concept of a covering force action. He would trade space for time by carefully deploying his troopers along likely avenues of approach in videttes. The engaged units were to put up as strong a fight as possible and then fall back to the next level of defense and so on. The division headquarters was to be at the Lutheran Seminary, which offered a great view from its cupola.

Early that morning, Lieutenant Marcellus Jones from DuPage County, Illinois, borrowed Sergeant Levi Shafer's single-shot carbine and fired what was a seemingly innocuous shot at a Rebel officer. That single act bought Buford and his small force about two hours, for it convinced Heth that he needed to deploy his division. And so throughout the morning and into the afternoon Buford and his brigade commanders did the little things it took to keep the Army of the Potomac in the fight at Gettysburg, including having the 8th Illinois form up for a charge against the 52nd North Carolina Infantry. This was enough to convince its colonel to form a square — a frequently used Napoleonic tactic meant to fight off cavalry charges.

Later in the day, Buford was ordered to stop the Confederates assumed to be forming for an attack against the Federal positions now rallied along Cemetery Hill. So he had his two brigades form up and threaten a charge. That was it for Buford and his men for the day. They were ordered to guard the Federal left flank, putting them in Sherfy's Peach Orchard. By about one o'clock on the afternoon on July 2, Buford and his men were ordered to the Federal rear to rest and refit at

Westminster, Maryland. They missed the rest of the battle, but not the pursuit. They were back in their saddles again soon after the battle.

On behalf of the round table, I wish to thank Eric Wittenberg for his fantastic presentation on Buford and his division at Gettysburg.

June Saturday Discussion

All members and guests are invited to participate in the session to be held at the Hoffman Estates Community Bank, 1375 Palatine Road, Hoffman Estates, on Saturday, June 20, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Attendees are asked to park in the adjacent lot rather than in spaces provided for bank customers. The group will discuss post-war careers of prominent leaders.

These discussions are generally held on the third Saturday of the month from September through June. They are held to generate and foster a free exchange of ideas on events that transpired during the Civil War.

Executive Board Meeting

The executive board of the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table will meet on June 20, 2015, at the Hoffman Estates Bank, 1375 Palatine Road, Hoffman Estates, at 9 a.m. prior to the regular Saturday discussion meeting.

Book Discussion Group

The Civil War book discussion group led by Tom DeFranco at the Eisenhower Library, 4613 North Oketo, Harwood Heights, meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 until 11:30 a.m. On June 6 attendees are invited to bring recent books for discussion.

Women's Civil War Book Club

The next book for the Civil War book club for women is *Nostalgia* by Dennis McFarland. The location, date, and time of the discussion are to be determined. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Denise Limburg at (847) 382-1022 or dlimburg@prodigy.net, or Mary Banks at zeller1@comcast.net or (847) 497-3149.



2014–15 Officers and Trustees

President	David Powell
1st Vice President	Patrick McCormick
2nd Vice President	Pending
Secretary	Bruce Allardice
Treasurer	Tom DeFranco, Jr.
Corresponding Sec.	Sarah McDougall
Membership	Jerry Allen
Historian	Kathleen Lange
Trustee	Charles Carr
Trustee	Danielle Kafka
Trustee	Charles Brenneman
Trustee	Wayne Rhine
Trustee	Kathleen Lange
Trustee	Alisa Corsi

Appointed Positions

Book Raffle	Charles Banks
Newsletter Editor	Sally Smith

May Raffle

The May raffle winners were Dan Josephs, who won *Great Gambles of the Civil War* by Philip Katcher, donated by Emil Bahnmaier; Phil Thornton, who won *A Scythe of Fire: Through the Civil War with One of Lee's Most Legendary Regiments* by Warren Wilkinson and Steven E. Woodworth; Mary Banks, who won *The Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg* by Earl S. Miers; and Tom DeFranco, who won *A Gentleman and an Officer: A Military and Social History of James B. Griffin's Civil War* by Judith N. MacArthur and Orville V. Burton.

Congratulations to the winners and sincere thanks to the donors. To donate Civil War-related books or items, please contact Charlie Banks.

A group of special books will be available in the raffle at the June 5, 2015, banquet meeting.

June Events

Through June 15, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Remembrance Field: A Civil War Memorial. Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at www.thecivilwarmuseum.org or (262) 653-4140.

June 6–7, Civil War Days, Baker/Koren Round Barn Farm Park, Manhattan. This event features infantry, cavalry, and artillery re-enactors, as well as musicians, horses, and medical personnel. The Battlefield Balladeers will perform Songs of the Civil War. More information is available at (815) 478-3324 or manhattanparkdistrict.com.

June 9, McHenry County Civil War Round Table. Robert Girardi will speak on General Gouverneur K. Warren.

June 11, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Jeff Shaara will discuss the final book in his Civil War tetralogy, *The Fateful Lightning*, which covers the final months of battle in Georgia and the Carolinas, noon; suggested \$5 donation at the door.

June 12, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Bob Braun will speak on Companies H and I of the

33rd Wisconsin Infantry, noon. Program sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and the Iron Brigade Association.

June 12, Chicago Civil War Round Table. Garry Adelman will speak on 4D Civil War Photography Extravaganza.

June 13, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. 8th Annual Salute to Freedom presents encampments, living history programs, and demonstrations to celebrate the soldiers' return home from war.

June 19, Salt Creek Civil War Round Table. Greg Biggs will speak on *Debate on the Rivers: The Fort Henry–Fort Donelson Campaign*.

June 21, Lake County Civil War Round Table will hold its annual picnic at Shelter C, Van Patten Woods, noon.

June 27–28, Civil War Reenactment Weekend, Fischer Farm, Bensenville. There will be a rally for drills in the morning and a skirmish in the afternoon. The Battlefield Balladeers will perform. More information is available at bensenvillepark-district.org or (630) 766-7015.

**To learn more about this Round Table call Jerry Allen at (847) 516-6429
or visit our website at www.northernilcwrt.org**