



Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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Battle Cry deadline is
1:00PM Wed. two weeks
before the regular
meeting. Items can be
given the editor by hand,
mail or e-mail.

President's Message:

Thanks to Brad Schall for his gripping presentation of *The Invasion of Kentucky*, a demonstration of the drama of the American Civil War. It had all the elements of high theatre: the strategic necessity to the South's cause to bring Kentucky into the active fold; the failure of the citizenry to join up; the bumbling of practically all the brass from Halleck on down; the ambitious moves without orders of Smith and others; the murder of one angry general by another who didn't answer for it; guerilla warfare and bushwhacking; the importance of the railroads; the threat to Cincinnati; the importance of terrain and weather (the drought); the destruction of Buell's career and the maintenance of Bragg's; the final culmination at Perryville and Bragg's retreat. I found it especially interesting as it gave Lew Wallace an opportunity to revive somewhat his shelved career by saving Cincinnati with the aid of an aroused citizenry and getting appointed by his nemesis Halleck on the commission to evaluate Buell's performance and thus get an opportunity to criticize Halleck. Kudos to Brad for stepping in at the last minute after John Martini was forced to cancel.

On that subject it is still uncertain whether John will be available for March but if not Fred Bohmfalk will discuss the real makeup of Grant, Sherman and Sheridan.

Several of us had the pleasure of attending William C. "Jack" Davis' talk at the Peninsula Round Table. His subject was a comparison of Lincoln and Jeff Davis. Jack has authored numerous books, was editor for years of *Civil War Times Illustrated*, and is presently teaching back east. We thoroughly enjoyed his talk and his company.

We're set for the Doubletree in November 2006. Plans are underway to present *The War on the Water* and so far have recruited Ed Bearss and Craig Symonds. We are hoping for a resounding success and heavy participation on our part.

Look forward to seeing you in March.

Don Hayden.

**NEXT MEETING!!! March 9th at 7:00PM at the Hof
Brau on the northeast corner of El Camino & Watt
Ave. Come early for dinner and conversation. Fred
Bohmfolk will discuss Grant, Sherman and Sheridan.**

SEE UPCOMING PROGRAMS ON PAGE 2

NOTE!!! The Editor has a new e-mail Address!!!

The cash balance following the February 9, 2005 meeting was \$1,117.01. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$56.00.

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2005
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT 2500 WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDENCE 27

Members – 32

Don Hyden, President
Susan Williams, Vice President
George Foxworth, Treasurer
Edie Keister, Secretary
Roy Bishop
Fred Bohmfalk
Ardith Cnota
Mitchell Cnota

Kirk Fujikawa
Alan Geiken
Kyle Glasson
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Dennis Kohlmann
Leslie Michaels
Jim Middleton
Betty Mitchell

Maurice Mitchell
John Nevins
Natalie Schafer
Rudy Schafer
Brad Schall
Richard Sickert
Bob Williams
Maxine Wollen
John Zasso

Guest –2
Ken Dalpe'
Sharon McGaughey

1. Meeting started promptly at 7:00. John Martini, our scheduled speaker, had to cancel. Member Brad Schull volunteered to be our speaker. President Hayden requested all members to update information on the roster. Guest were welcomed.
2. John Nevins talked about the replica of the Hunley to be displayed at Gibson Ranch in May. He brought pictures of the project to pass around. Dennis Kohlmann spoke on the 06' conference, the place, the topic, and price. Dennis is looking for volunteers to help make a quilt to raffle at the conference. Mitch Cnota suggested a European tour to trace the roots of the ship Alabama.
3. Financial statements for 2004 were available for those who wanted one. (Thanks Mr. Foxworth)
4. President Hayden introduced our fellow member, Brad Schull, to speak on "Kirby Smith, Braxton Bragg and the invasion of Kentucky." Accompanied with charts and maps, his talk was filled with many detailed facts and lots of humor. Brad is a descendent of 22 members of the Union Army and dedicated his presentation to them. Thanks, Brad it was great.
5. The raffle was held, many tickets sold, (let's keep up the nice contributions). Meeting ended at 8:20.

Edie Keister
Secretary

Upcoming Programs 2005

Month	Speaker	Topic
April	Phil Avila	Kershaw- From first to Last
May	Walt Bittle	Events Leading To Attack on Ft. Sumter
June	Paul Ruud	Lincoln Assassination
July	John Martini	Fortress Alcatraz
August	Open	
September	George Beitzel	Lincoln at Ft. Stevens and Presidential Military Exp.
October	Ray Bisio	To the Edge of Greatness: Meade at Gettysburg



Brad Schall, Fred Bohmfalk, Phil Avila, W.C. "Jack" Davis and Don Hayden at Davis' talk at Dominic's at Poplar Creek in San Mateo on February 15, 2005.

The following quote is from a diary entry written by a lieutenant in the 3rd Kentucky Infantry Regiment (U.S.). Specifically, it is in "The Union, The Civil War, and John W. Tuttle: A Kentucky Captain's Account" Hambleton Tapp & James C. Klotter, eds. The Kentucky Historical Soc. 1980. pp. 118-119.

"Monday, Sept. 8th [1862]. Rejoined the regiment about daybreak and marched six miles in the direction of Galatin [Tennessee], and bivouacked. The principal incident of the day was the demolition of a formidable nest of yellow jackets. I planned the attack and Capt. Taylor 'did the work for them' in handsome style. Under my direction the gallant Captain sent forward his Aid[e] De Camp with about 1/4 lb. of [gun]powder while he himself in his own proper person followed at about the distance of three paces with a large grain shovel full of coals and hot embers. When my forces reached the earth works of the enemy the van-guard CHARGED the fort and the Captain immediately emptied the contents of his shovel upon the citadel. Immediately there was a tremendous explosion and the brave little garrison 'went up.' Our loss was but two wounded. Capt. Taylor had his face badly burned with powder and embers and (Drum) Major Crugan (who was asleep on the ground near by) had his face bruised severely by a stump Col. Scott's horse took with [him] when he rather hastily retired from the scene of action." Best regards, Ken Hansgen

Impressions of Appomattox

While attending a meeting in Washington DC in a couple years ago, I had an opportunity to visit Appomattox Court House, Virginia. If you have not been there, I recommend it as an essential pilgrimage. Although there were shots fired well after April 9, 1865, that was the day that the war really did end!

I found that I spent most of the time we were at Appomattox Court House at the McLean House. That meeting place to me is Appomattox! This is where Generals Grant and Lee sat in the living room while forging an agreement that signaled the end to four years of bloodshed. The furnishings in the room at this point are almost all reproductions, but I did not find that to be distracting. The area is roped off so you stand at the entrance to the living room, observing where Grant and Lee sat as they negotiated in April of 1865. I believe that as the news of the meeting spread, the symbolism created and the message sent by the professionalism of the participants was of paramount importance.

The agreements signed during the meeting reflected mutual respect, not only personally between the two leaders, but also for the manner in which each had handled the challenges of the previous four years. The war was about many things, but "a Union that was to be preserved" was the common understanding of that day. From that room, the message from vanquisher to vanquished was one of "welcome back!" The decisiveness and insight of the two military leaders on that April day set a tone for the next several years that in

large part survived, even though greatly diminished by Lincoln's assassination. The fact that these two men met is not surprising when one considers the dispositions and sizes of the forces on both sides of the battlefield.

The Confederates were badly outnumbered, underfed, under-armed with their retreat routes blocked – surrender or slaughter appear to have been the alternatives. The actions of the two generals are what I find to have been particularly laudable. Grant and Lee were both looking ahead to the healing process that would be necessary in order to re-unite all states under the same flag. As I stood in the doorway, it was almost like being transported back to 1865. There were no lap tops, no cell phones, no instant communications – nonetheless, decisions with immense consequences were made with the accountability inescapable. Each man felt a total responsibility for the people affected by the events of the day, but nonetheless, the "buck stopped in the McLean House living room. No other representatives of these governments could have concluded the needs of the day with more dignity and fairness.

The aura of "greatness" lingered in the room in 2003 and sensing it while there was unavoidable. In spite of all the battlefield achievements for which these two men have been rightly praised, the hours at Appomattox were their greatest moments. In my opinion, April 9, 1865, ranks in the top three of the most important days in the history of the United States of America. The other two days for me are V-J Day ending WWII and the coming down of the Berlin Wall.

By Paul Ruud

The Naval Battle of Charleston Bay

7 April 1863

Following the success of the original USS *Monitor* at the Battle of Hampton Roads on 9 March 62, the Union was gripped by a sense of "Monitor Mania". Within a week the Congress had appropriated some \$4,000,000 for a new class of ten improved versions of the Ericsson designed turreted ironclad. They were known as the "Passaic" class after the name of the first such vessel to be commissioned in November 1862.

No one was perhaps more elated by these events than the Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells and his very able Assistant Gustavus Fox. Wells (Lincoln called him "Father Neptune") was an accomplished administrator, but with limited naval experience. Fox, on the other hand, was a former naval officer; and he in effect became a civilian ad hoc Chief of Naval Operations. Together, all things considered, they made an outstanding leadership team. But in the case at point, it is believed by many that their enthusiasm overwhelmed their usual good judgement.

The ten new monitors incorporated several changes from their prototype. They were larger (200ft. vs. 179ft.), heavier (1335tons vs. 987tons), with heavier armament (15in. smoothbores vs. 11in.) and armor (11in. vs. 8in.); and they had a redesigned hull to make them more sea worthy. The crew was increased from 49 to 67. A major change was placing the pilothouse over the turret, which allowed better visibility and communication. But it also made it a better target. On the downside, the engines were the same, which rendered the new ships to be under-powered. They could barely steam at 6 knots, whereas the original *Monitor* could make 9 knots. Additionally, deck armor remained too thin to adequately protect against plunging fire; since when conceived, the vessels were designed to fight against enemy ironclads not fortifications.

An early decision was made to try the new Passaic class monitor fleet against the harbor defenses at Charleston. Charleston was, of course, special in the minds of Northerners as the "Cradle of the Rebellion", and also because it was a difficult port to blockade. This was upper most in the minds of Wells and Fox, particularly perhaps Fox since he had been instrumental in the April 1861 unsuccessful efforts to reinforce and resupply Major Anderson's forces at Fort Sumter. They proposed this new action to be a Navy only affair.

Charleston was also a symbol to the Confederates and they were determined to defend it to the limits. By mid-1862 its fortifications had been strengthened. In addition to Forts Sumter and Moultrie numerous batteries had been built around the bay and any ships that tried to run the gauntlet had to pass at least six forts before reaching the city. General Beauregard had been returned to command there in September 1862, and Charleston Bay had become a huge armed "cul de sac" with a rim of fire of over 200 guns, plus extensive mine (torpedo) fields fired both by electrical devices and by impact. In addition, coded range buoys had been set such that when passed a ship's azimuth and distance was known to all gunners within range and accurate fire could be commenced almost immediately. Certainly, it was not similar to New Orleans with a single strong point defending it, but that comparison had nevertheless erroneously been made.

Samuel Francis Du Pont had been a senior captain in the old navy with continuing service since 1815, when he became a 12-year Midshipman. He was a member of a wealthy French aristocratic family that had migrated to Delaware to establish various chemical manufactories including gunpowder, making about 75% of the union supply during the Civil War. Obviously, he was serving in the Navy because he wanted to, not because he needed the employment! At the beginning of the War, while in command of the Philadelphia Naval Yard, DuPont was named president of a "strategy" board to plan Navy wartime operations, namely the southern coastal blockading arrangements envisioned in General Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan. Subsequently, three (later four) blockading squadrons were formed. These were North Atlantic, South Atlantic, East and West Gulf. Du Pont was promoted to Flag Officer, later Rear Admiral, to command the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. His counterparts in the other squadrons were Louis

Goldsborough (Silas Stringham for a short period), North Atlantic, and David Farragut, East and West Gulf..

The South Atlantic B. S. had jurisdiction of the coast from the North Carolina border to Cape Canaveral. Headquarters were at Port Royal. Port Royal Sound had been occupied in early November 1861 by a joint Army-Navy command of 12,000 troops under BG Thomas W. (the other) Sherman and 17 wooden war ships under Du Pont. Later rebel resistance along the entire south coast crumbled except at Charleston and Savannah, but the Army was not willing (or able?) to undertake further joint operations at that time. Fort Pulaski, guarding sea approaches to Savannah, did fall to a purely Army operation in April '62, under BG Quincy Gillmore, but other joint or single Army follow-up efforts at Charleston did not appear in the offing. Hence the Navy, that is Wells and Fox with Lincoln's concurrence, decided to go it alone using the new Passaic monitors.

By August 1862, Du Pont's S. A. B. S. numbered 48 wooden ships of which eleven were watching Charleston. He knew that the rebels were building rams and ironclads and asked that an ironclad be assigned him as a precaution. He was sent the USS *New Ironsides*, the third ship in the competition that produced the *Galena* and the original *Monitor*. *New Ironsides* was a formidable vessel of armored casemate design and a near copy of the very successful French ocean-going warship *La Gloire*. She was heavily armored, displaced 4200 tons, 232 ft. long, 16 guns in broadside (14 x 11in Dahlgrens, and 2 x 150 pdr rifles), and carried a 460-man crew.

In October, Du Pont was ordered to Washington to meet with his superiors to make certain that he understood what he was about to be ordered to do regarding Charleston, and that he was willing to accept the assignment. Wells insisted that the attack was to be a Navy only affair, that the Army was not to be even invited to participate, that DuPont was to run past the forts to the city and demand its surrender on pain of bombardment, and that what was wanted was a repeat of Farragut's capture of New Orleans. Du Pont readily accepted the order, but noted that, with all due respect to Admiral Farragut, there was simply no comparison between the difficulties encountered at New Orleans with the vastly greater ones to be overcome at Charleston. He was asked how many monitors he thought would be required, and his response was something like "All I can get!" This reply was not well received by either Wells or Fox. Gus Fox had earlier announced, maybe jokingly, maybe not, that he thought one would be enough.

As it turned out Du Pont was allowed seven of the ten new Passaic class monitors, to be sent as they were completed at five ship yards from December '62-March '63. The original USS *Monitor* was also in route to Port Royal, but foundered and sank in a storm off Cape Hatteras 30 December '62. The new monitors were named: USS *Passaic*, *Montauk*, *Nahant*, *Patapsco*, *Weehawken*, *Catskill*, and *Nantuxet*. In addition, he was given use of the experimental USS *Keokuk*, a dual non-revolving turret affair carrying two 11in Dahlgrens in pivot mounts. This vessel's armor proved to be much too light for its assignment and it sank 8 April 63. As the fleet was being assembled for the Charleston attack, Du Pont made several test runs with a few monitors against Fort McAllister (on the Ogeechee River just south of Savannah). Conclusion was that fire from the Fort was doing very little damage to the monitors, but the monitors' fire was not doing significant harm to the earthen fort either. Of particular concern to Du Pont and many of the ship captains was the low cyclic rate of fire. The two-gun monitors might be shot proof, but one round from each ship every five minutes made them woefully deficient in assault capability.

During the first week of April 1863 the new fleet, perhaps the most powerful in the world up to that time, assembled at Port Royal and steamed for Charleston. Each ship was commanded by a picked battle experienced senior officer. Order of battle would be a single line-ahead passing the Morris Inland Batteries and Cummins Point to within 600-800 yards of Fort Sumter to bombard the weaker northwest walls. *Weehawken* (captained by the inimitable John Rogers) was to lead since she had a minesweeping device fixed to her bow. The flagship *New Ironsides* was in the center of the line and the *Keokuk* last.

The formation commenced to move into the Harbor mid-morning on 7 April, but three events caused delays. These were: fog was heavy and the pilots did not have sufficient visibility; *Weehauken's* minesweep grapnels fouled her anchor & chain; and, *New Ironsides* lost steerage and became unmanageable due to low water and rapid tidal flows. She had to pull out of line and anchor to prevent grounding and took only a minimal part in the battle. Afterward, it was discovered that her anchorage was directly over a large mine that the rebels had set to be fired electrically from Fort Moultrie; but they could not get it to fire!

It was not until about 3:00 p.m. that *Weehauken* passed the final range marker buoy and seventy-six pre-sighted guns of Charleston's outer defense system commenced firing. Their accuracy was superb. All hell broke loose for the next two hours, and each of the monitors was under intensive fire for at least 45 minutes. A total of 439 projectiles hit the ships; all except two (*Montauk* and *Catskill*) were moderately to severely damaged. None was in a sinking condition, except *Keokuk*, who "riddled like a colander" sank the next morning, after a noble effort of the crew to save her. The closest any of the ships had gotten to Fort Sumter was about 900 yards.

At 5:00 p.m. Admiral DuPont, although not yet aware of the degree of damage, considered it too late in the day to continue the fight, so he adjourned it, fully intending to continue the battle in the morning. The harbor defenses had fired a total of 2209 rounds, whereas the fleet had fired 151. That evening DuPont met with the ship captains and, when learning the extent of the damage, readily canceled any further attack. All of the captains later strongly supported his decision.

The continued pounding of the vessels had not penetrated the heavy side, turret and pilothouse armor, but deck armor had been broken on some ships, and leakage was occurring taxing the pumps. More seriously was the general weakening of the laminated side and turret armor by the shearing of rivets and bolts that held it together. Iron plating had been bent, loosened, shattered or driven-in with penetration incipient. Turrets had been jammed and guns disabled on some ships and the flying bolts and rivet heads were like missiles in the turrets and pilothouses. One ship, *Nahant*, had her steering gear disarranged. Miraculously, there were only ten deaths. Fox used this low body count in a later attempt to discredit DuPont's terminating the battle. Had the pounding continued the Admiral believed that there was a reasonable probability that a defeat could turn into a disaster?

Admiral Dupont's decision was not well received in Washington. There was acrimonious correspondence between the Admiral and his superiors. Critical and erroneous newspaper articles began to appear, but Secretary Wells refused to refute them or to publicly release DuPont's official report and those of the captains. That the captains backed up their Admiral did not impress him. He dismissed their reports as coming from the DuPont "clique". Wells and Fox simply did not wish to hear that the monitors might have limitations, nor would they accept reports of the extent of damage that occurred.

Recognizing an intolerable situation, the Admiral submitted his resignation. He was replaced in June '63 by Admiral Andrew Foote, but the latter died three weeks later (Foote had never fully recovered from his April '62 wounds at Fort Donaldson). The assignment was then given to Admiral John Dahlgren. The monitors were repaired, the War continued, and it did not take that Admiral long to also recognize that the Navy alone could not take Charleston. It was not until 18 February 1865 that Dahlgren telegraphed Wells, "Charleston was abandoned this morning by the rebels. I am now on my way to that City". That was, of course, after MG W. T. (the better known) Sherman had isolated the City and bypassed it.

Samuel DuPont died 23 June 1865. His only fault being that he had been too candid with his superiors. Gideon Wells's treatment of Rear Admiral Dupont was both unfair and unwarranted. This was, however, one of the very few weak moments in his otherwise superb tenure as Union Secretary of War and wartime cabinet member.

References: "ORN's" S1V13&14, S2V1--"Naval History of the Civil War" by Bert Anderson, 1962 --"Gideon Wells" by John Niven, 1973--"Battles & Leaders" V4 **Bob Williams**: 2-15-05

The Battle of Charleston Bay

April 7, 1863



Assistant Navy Secretary Gustavus Fox



Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells



Rear Admiral Samuel DuPont

