



**Volume 46, No. 10  
October 2006**

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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.**

# ***Battle Cry***

**Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702  
<http://sacramentoewrt.com/>**



## **President's Message:**

Thanks to Dennis Kohlmann for stepping in at the last minute and giving an excellent talk on the Irish in the Confederacy. Although I missed it I was able to hear his presentation at Sac State the following Friday and was impressed with the extent of his research. He also discussed the fascinating Battle of Sabine Pass and with luck, we might talk him into presenting that next year.

On that subject, we would appreciate input from our members on the upcoming schedule for 2007. We strive for a balance between outside speakers and talks from our own members. If there are thoughts on topics of interest and especially if any of our group would like to give a talk please come forward and tell us of your interest.

We also are looking for members willing to serve as officers or members-at-large. Our board consists of eight members, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Battle Cry Editor, Webmaster, and two Members-at-Large. Elections are held each October. Please notify me if interested at (916) 485-1246 or [djhbooklover@yahoo.com](mailto:djhbooklover@yahoo.com). We are hopeful that volunteers will come forth to assist in managing this club.

I am happy that a large number of us are planning to attend the November conference on **The War On The Waters**. Every effort is being made to ensure this will be a notable event. Those who have attended past conferences will confirm this is a highlight of every year and provides us with the opportunity to meet not only nationally known Civil War experts but other round table members as well.

This month we are privileged to once again enjoy local attorney and historian, Paul Wagstaffe, who will discuss relations with the French and British in the context of the Civil War. Don't miss this one. Come early for dinner and conversation.

### **Don Hayden**

**NEXT MEETING: September 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM at the Hof Brau,  
El Camino & Watt Ave.  
SEE UPCOMING PROGRAMS ON PAGE 3.**

The cash balance following the September 13, 2006 meeting was \$1,777.55. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$58.00.  
**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

**MINUTES**  
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2006  
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO, CA

Attendance-32

Members-30

Don Hayden, President	Alan Geiken	Jim Middleton
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Kyle Glasson	Maurice Mitchell
Edie Keister, Secretary	Chuck Hobbard	Betty Mitchell
Ricki Adams	Pam Hubbard	John Nevins
Dudley Albrecht	Shelley Jones	Paul Rudd
Roy Bishop	Dennis Kohlmann	Brad Schall
Fred Bohmfalk	Lowell Lardie	Bob Williams
Evan Cole	Victor Le	Maxine Wollen
Irene Cole	Grace Long	John Zasso
Brad Friedman	Leslie Michaels	<u>Guest-2</u>
		Mark Penning
		Horst Penning

1. Meeting started at 7:05. Paul Rudd filled in for President Hayden. Members were encouraged to step up to fill positions for 2007 officers, so step up if you're interested. 2006 conference was discussed -itinerary, etc. Hands were shown for those already signed up and those planning to.
2. Member Dennis Kohlmann stepped up to bat when our scheduled speaker couldn't make a showing. He spoke on the "Irish in the Confederacy." Their life coming over from Ireland -adjusting to new life and prejudices in the U.S., moving to the South and joining the rebellion. It was very well done. Dennis, thanks boyo!
3. Raffle was held -meeting adjourned at a very early 8:15.

Edie Keister  
Secretary

Coming Programs 2006		
Month	Speaker	Topic
October 11 <sup>th</sup>	Paul Wagstaffe	Franks & Brits : Rebels & Yankees
November 10-12 <sup>th</sup>	Conference	War on the Waters
December 13 <sup>th</sup>		Christmas Party and Feedback from the Conference
January 10 <sup>th</sup>	Ken Hansgen	Lew Wallace's Bad Day
February 14 <sup>th</sup>	Jim Middleton	The Civil War Diary of George Templeton Strong
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	open	
April 11 <sup>th</sup>	open	

### **Confederate Ironclads**

Stephen Russell Mallory (1813-73), a maritime lawyer from Key West, was elected U.S. Senator from Florida in 1850. From 1853, he had chaired the Senate's Naval Affairs Committee, and became the major civilian spokesman for U.S. Naval policy and a leading proponent of American naval power. Stephan Mallory had all of the credentials necessary to have become an excellent U.S. Secretary of the Navy in 1861, except one, loyalty. Although initially opposing secession, he served until his position was abolished and "went south" when his state seceded. His services were no longer desired in Washington, D.C. As events unfolded Gideon Welles (1803-78) was appointed Union Navy Secretary. Although far from being initially as knowledgeable, Welles served as an able administrator with great efficiency, competence and loyalty, and in fact brought an overall steady influence to the entire Lincoln cabinet. Mallory became Confederate Naval Secretary in March 1861. I believe it is generally agreed today by most historians that both sides made excellent choices for their wartime Secretaries of the Navy.

Mallory recognized early-on that the Confederacy could not compete with the Union Navy one for one in building war ships. He was effectively starting with nothing while the Union had a nucleus of some 60 vessels, although many were neither of the newest design nor best condition. Mallory's hope was to counter the Union's numerical and industrial advantages by technology, including an ironclad fleet to be equipped with heavy rifled guns. To this end he pulled together an excellent senior technical staff consisting of: John L Porter, Chief Naval Constructor; Steam Engineer-in-Chief William P. Williamson; and John M. Brooke, an innovative ordinance specialist. Each of these people had previously served in the U.S. Navy, providing long-term technical staff services.

For starters, the Confederate Navy was handed a gift by the Union when the latter failed to totally destroy the Gosport Shipyard at Norfolk upon their withdrawal in April 1861. Left intact was the large dry dock, over 1000 large-caliber naval guns, including 300 Dahlgrens, ammunition, and considerable ship building machinery. Also remaining was the USS *Merrimack*, burnt to the waterline, but rebuildable with an ironclad superstructure. She would

emerge nine months later as the CSS *Virginia I*, the prototype for all future rebel ironclads, except two. They were the CSS *Arkansas* and the late arriving French built CSS *Stonewall*.

The basic design of the CSS *Virginia I* centered around a wooden casemate frame two feet thick and sloped at a 35° angle (to deflect incoming projectiles upward and dissipate a portion of their energy) covered with two layers of two-inch thick iron. The armor was extended from the casemate top to below the water line. Armament consisted of six nine inch Dahlgren smooth bores and two 6.4 inch Brooke rifles in broadside, plus two 7 inch Brooke rifles in bow and stern pivot mounts. In addition, a 1,500 pound cast iron ram was fitted to her bow, three feet below the water line; the hull was all submerged offering virtually no vital target to the enemy.

Was the *Virginia I* of good design? Absolutely, John Porter and John Brooke had done there jobs well. Did she have faults? Indeed she did, the prototype confederate ironclad suffered from lack of speed, poor maneuverability and a very deep draft (23 feet), but the vessel's performance at the Battle of Hampton Roads, 8-9 March 1862, proved the basic worthiness of her design. Over the period of the War, the confederates commenced construction of 50 Ironclads at various southern state locations with 22 commissioned and brought into service. The others were either abandoned due to lack of materials or destroyed before completion to prevent capture. Six of the ships were converted from existing vessels, during 1861-62. With *Virginia I* they were: CSS *Manassas*, *Baltic*, *Eastport*, *Atlanta* and *Mobile*.

None of the latter really worked out very well due to limitations of the basic hull and propulsion systems.

In late 1862, work began on five new ironclads designed from the keel up. They were the CSS *Georgia* for service near Savannah; and, the CSS *Louisiana*, *Mississippi*, *Tennessee I*, and *Arkansas* for Mississippi Delta and River protection. The latter four were built at New Orleans and Memphis, respectively. During the Battle of New Orleans, *Louisiana*, whose engines had not yet been installed, was used as a floating battery; but destroyed by her own crew to prevent capture. *Mississippi*, still under construction, was also destroyed by her builder when Farragut's union armada captured the City. *Arkansas* and *Tennessee I* were sister ships designed by Porter and being built in Memphis. The latter was burnt to prevent capture, but the *Arkansas* escaped up the Yazoo River for completion, subsequently fighting a series of running battles near Vicksburg, prior to destruction near Baton Rouge, Aug. 1862. William D. "Dirty Bill" Porter said that he did it with gun fire from his USS *Essex*, but the bulk of the evidence seems to support Captain Stevens of the *Arkansas* who said he blew-up his ship to prevent capture.

By early 1863 of the ten ironclads mentioned above only the CSS *Atlanta* remained. It had become clear to Mallory that attempts to break the blockade were too optimistic. Rebel strategy was varied to better protect the remaining harbors, rivers and inlets. Consequently a new breed of ironclads was needed. Two new basic designs were submitted by Chief Naval Constructor John Porter and approved. The first group to be

known as the “Richmond” Class included the CSS *Richmond*, *Chicora*, *Palmetto State*, *North Carolina*, *Raleigh* and *Savannah*; and several others never completed. The new ironclads were “leaner” and “meaner” so to speak; shorter at 150 to 174 feet, shallower drafts of 12-14 feet, heavier armor up to 6 inches thick, single screw driven, and fewer (2 to 4), but larger caliber guns.

A later variant, the *Charleston* and *Virginia II* were longer at 200 feet with still heavier armor. They were prompted by lessons learned from the capture of CSS *Atlanta* in June 1863, when U.S. monitors with 15 inch smooth bores punctured its 4 inch 35° sloping armor. Another variant of particular note was the CSS *Tennessee II* (and the never completed *Columbia* and *Texas*), which proved her worth at the 5 August 1864 Battle of Mobile Bay before surrendering to a swarm of union war ships and monitors. A note of particular interest: CSA Admiral Franklin Buchanan had commanded the CSS *Virginia I* in the first battle of the ironclads at Hampton Roads and the CSS *Tennessee II* in the last such battle in Mobile Bay, and had been wounded on both occasions. When was enough enough for this unique old sailor? He fought a real shooting war at home, while the South’s other admiral was on a 30 month cruise sinking 67 unarmed Union merchant ships.

The final confederate ironclad variations have all been grouped as the “diamond-hull” type. This reflects the appearance of the casemate when viewed from above as the shape of an octagonal-cut diamond. The casemates were built without curves because it was

difficult to make compound bends in the armor plating. This group included the CSS *Tuscaloosa* and *Huntsville* and three others not completed on the Alabama River at Selma. Also, the CSS *Albemarle* and *Neuse* built in North Carolina, both being John Porter designs. *Neuse* ran aground on her maiden voyage and was scuttled. *Albemarle* had a distinguished albeit brief career engaging Union vessels, mainly “Double Enders” in Albemarle Sound before being sunk in a 27 October 1864 spar torpedo attack led by Union Navy LT William Cushing near Plymouth N.C. (See “Battle Cry” Article, April 05). CSS *Fredericksburg* was a larger improved version of the diamond-hull group; built at Richmond and served in the James River Squadron until destroyed by her crew upon the fall of that City. (So many of the rebel ironclads had been destroyed by their own crews to prevent capture that Diarist Mary Chestnut is said to have commented to Mallory at the launching ceremony for one new vessel: “It is a beautiful ship Mister Secretary, but when are you going to burn it?”). Two additional ironclads commissioned, but never seeing active service were the CSS *Missouri*, built at Shreveport on the Red River and the CSS *Nashville* built at Montgomery, Alabama.

In summary, the design of the Confederate ironclads improved as the War progressed. The basic design conceived by Mallory, Porter and Brooke remained the best available form of warship for the rebels given their severe limitations in construction skill, materials and facilities relative to the Union’s industrial power. The U.S monitors were more sophisticated war machines, but not alone decidedly

so in the opinion of many naval experts.

Apart from ordinance three ingredients went into the production of ironclads: hardwood for construction of the basic hulls and casemate structures, rolled sheet iron for armor plating, and steam propulsions systems, including engines and boilers. Wood was generally readily available in the South, but poor rail roads frequently made transportation a problem. Quality control at remote locations was not the best and green lumber was occasionally substituted with the predictive results of warping, opening of seams and leakage.

Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond was the main supplier of rolled sheet iron up to two inches thick, plus a few smaller foundries from Virginia to Selma, Alabama. Three laminated layers of two-inch plates were used for the later ironclads. At remote shipyards where transportation was again a problem, Railroad "T-rail" iron was sometimes substituted, either directly or re-rolled into two-inch plate strips. This was effective, albeit inferior and further rail removal added to the already critical railroad transportation problems. Ordinance consisted of high quality Brooke rifles cast at the Selma Arsenal, plus the large supply of equally high quality Dahlgren smooth bores "donated" by the Union Navy upon their earlier withdrawal from Gosport Naval Yard. The Confederate Navy was never short of guns during the War, and it can even be argued that the Brooke's guns were superior to anything in the Union naval arsenal.

The weakest (and some say fatal) link in the Confederacy's ironclad program was their inability to produce quality and reliable

propulsion systems. The steam engines, frequently pirated from smaller and lighter commercial ships, were simply undersized and subject to continuing disrepair. Later Tredegar started making quality large engines and boilers, and imported marine engines were still later being received from England, but in very limited numbers. This matter was extremely critical and was the main cause of the low success of the Rebel ironclad ram fleet. Why equip an ironclad with a ram bow anyway when its speed and maneuverability were so low that it could not make a U-turn within half and hour; nor stem the current of normal river velocities without being towed? Notwithstanding, the Rebel ironclad program was a deterrent to the Union Navy and it is a marvel that it was advanced so far with the limited resources available to the South.

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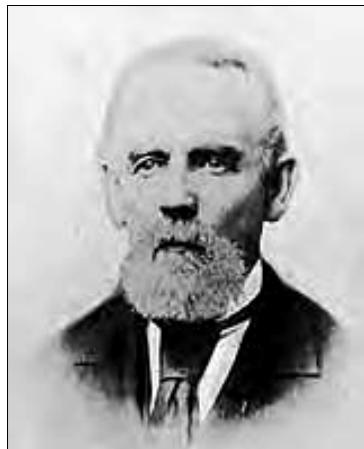
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**Bob Williams; 9-02-06**

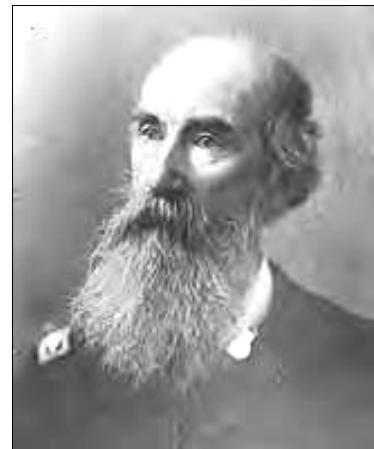
# Confederate Ironclads



John L. Porter

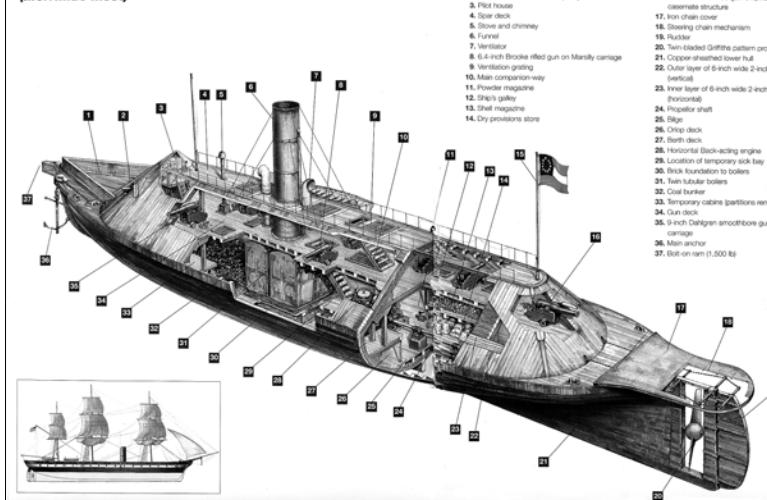


Stephen R. Mallory

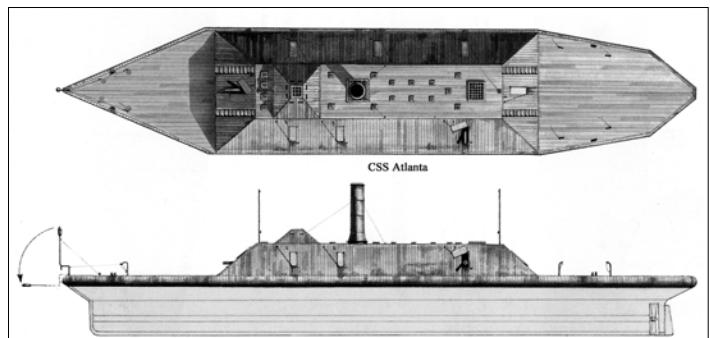


John M. Brooke

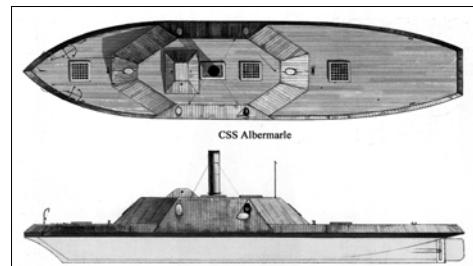
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(Merrimac inset)



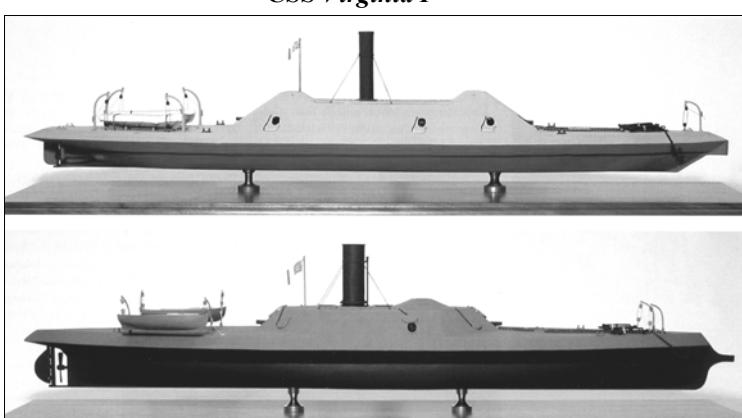
CSS Virginia I



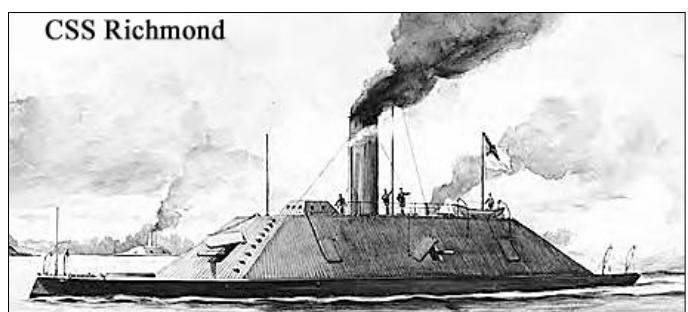
CSS Atlanta



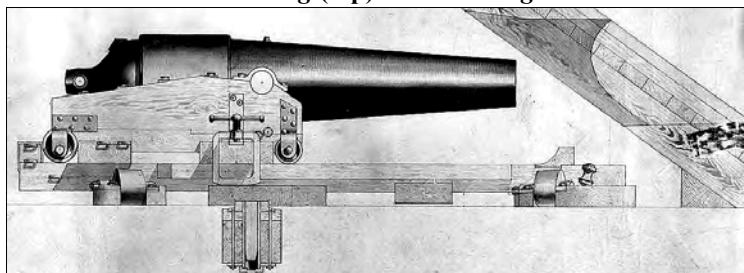
CSS Albemarle



CSS Richmond



CSS Fredericksburg (top) and CSS Virginia II



Brooke 7 inch Banded Navy Rifle



CSS Albemarle (Floating Scale Model, 0.375 to 1.00)

# ASPECTS OF THE WAR ON THE WATERS

NOVEMBER 10, 11, 12, 2006

HOSTED AT THE LUXURIOUS DOUBLETREE HOTEL  
2001 PENT WEST WAY, SACRAMENTO

FEATURING:

ED BEARSS      CRAIG SYMONDS

JIM STANBERY    DENNIS RINGLE    KEVIN FOSTER  
& THE 5TH CALIFORNIA VOLUNTARY INFANTRY REGIMENT BAND PERFORMING WITH  
PERIOD INSTRUMENTS

All for only \$160! (\$170 after October 2 postmark) Price includes all seminars, Friday night dinner, Saturday lunch and Dinner Banquet and Sunday Brunch

For more information and registration forms:

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Carol Breiter (916) 729-7644 E-mail CarolABreiter@aol.com or visit www.sacramentocwrt.com

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An event to raise funds for Civil War Battlefield Preservation  
Donations accepted - make donation checks payable to: Sacramento CWRT

Registration for November 10-12, 2006 West Coast Civil War Round Table Conference

Name/Organization to appear on badge \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Registration Fees (per person/including meals)

\$160 until October 2 Postmark      \$170 after October 2 Postmark

Meals desired for person(s) accompanying registrant but not registered for the conference:

These meals to be paid at the conference

Friday dinner \_\_\_\_ (\$25ea) Saturday lunch \_\_\_\_ (\$20ea) Saturday Banquet \_\_\_\_ (\$25ea) Sunday brunch \_\_\_\_ (\$20ea)

Do you have any dietary needs or special assistance? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your check for registration fee only.

Make checks payable to: Sacramento C. W. R. T.

And mail to: George Foxworth, 9463 Saishan Ct., Sacramento, CA. 95826-5233

CONFERENCE: "Wars within a War: Controversy and Conflict over the American Civil War" October 27-28 (Friday-Saturday) 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The Civil War saw the creation of two enormous armies that waged some of the bloodiest and most famous battles in American history. Although the United States and the Confederacy each attained a significant degree of unity, both dealt with serious internal fissures within their armies and on the home fronts. This conference explores the internal disagreements that posed serious challenges to both sides' war efforts and examines how those disagreements carried over into the postwar years.

\$25. Registration: 626-405-3432 or [skrasnoo@huntington.org](mailto:skrasnoo@huntington.org).

This conference has Gary Gallagher and Joan Waugh as Moderators with the following speakers: James M. McPherson, Joseph T. Glatthaar, Alice Fahs, Stephanie McCurry, Harold Holzer, Gary Gallagher, Stephen Cushman, J. Matthew Gallman, William Blair, Carol Reardon, David W. Blight, James Marten, Joan Waugh, and Drew Gilpin Faust.