



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday January 12th, 2010 Meeting #105

Dino's Restaurant at I90 & State Rt. 306 Willoughby, Ohio

Guest Speaker: Carl Dodaro

Topic: The Everyday Life of the a Civil War Soldier

Canteen at 6:00 pm Dinner at 7:00pm Guests are welcome

Reservations required Please call Steve Abbey

Phone 440 255 8375 e-Mail: abbeysr@yahoo.com

Carl Dodaro is a relatively new member of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table having signed on in 2008. Since joining our club he has not only faithfully attended meetings and field trips, but he is a regular contributor to the *Courier* with his many articles on unusual and always interesting Civil War topics. On Tuesday January 12th, 2010, Carl Dodaro will explore the “**Everyday Life of the Civil War Soldier.**”

Life for the average soldier was a constant battle against boredom, fatigue and the ever present possibility of dying from disease or angry gunfire from the enemy. The average Civil War soldier not only had to battle the” demons” of fear and self doubt within his own soul, but in many cases, he had to reassure his wife and family in letters back home that “everything would be alright.” That was easier said than done when men were dying all around him. Soldiers drilled in all kinds of weather conditions, ate dried beef, rock hard bread, drank coffee and whiskey or “O be joyful” when they could get it. All Civil War soldiers shared one burning wish, they all wanted to win the war and they all wanted the war to end.

Carl Dodaro is a graduate of Willoughby South High School. He and his wife Janet reside in Leroy, Ohio near the beautiful Lake Metro Park. They are the parents of 4 wonderful children: Heather and (Son-in Law: Wayne), Maria, David, and Dominic. Mr. Dodaro is the Auto Parts Manager at Junction Auto Sales in Chardon, Ohio and he has always had a special interest in military history. Carl Dodaro wanted to attend the U. S. Naval Academy but his Congressman, William Stanton chose someone else instead. The Navy lost a good officer but we are fortunate to have him in our club and we are honored to have Carl Dodaro for our speaker on a cold January night.

CIVIL WAR MINUTES by Franco M. Sperrazzo Special Events Coordinator

Richard L. McElroy entertained 54 members and guests with knowledge, experience, confidence, personality and preparation. Many of us spent time with **Richard** and his wonderful wife **Pamela** in 2002, and any thoughts that his skills may have diminished were instantly put to rest. **Mr. McElroy** was the featured speaker and perfect complement to musician **Brian Bird** on key board for our December 8, holiday program. **Richard** spoke on what several first ladies did to participate during the Civil War Era. We were treated to several stories and fascinating facts about former Presidents during their administrations. **Richard** has authored several books that sparked relevant questions during an effective question and answer session. I am grateful to have made contact with the **McElroy's** this past fall because it worked out so well. In fact **General JET** has asked **Rich** and **Pam** to be our honored guests for our 2011 holiday celebration!

Thoughts on the Past Year 2009: Our most senior President ever to be sworn in occurred in January when **Arlan Byrne 12** took the oath of office. **Mike Sears** took us through the difficult period of "Post War Reconstruction." In February **George Grim** presented a talk on the "Retreat of the Confederate Government April-May 1865." March brought out **Bob Baucher** to discuss the book "Blood Tears and Glory," and the significance Ohio played in gaining the Northern victory. April stirred up some healthy debate and controversy when **Bill Meissner** presented the "Paradox in Command," of General George B. McClellan. May became the **Norton London, Joe Tirpak Show**. Guess who defended Grant and who argued for Lee. . . Our Spring Day Trip was well received. 17 of us traveled to Canton proper in a return visit to the First Ladies Museum. This time because some of us arrived so early we viewed the education and research library, that was inner active and quite impressive. After the 1 hour hurried tour it went all downhill. We were asked to leave after 11:30 am to clear out for a 1pm luncheon. The gift shop lady was rude and spoiled whatever good will and professionalism the ticket taker greeter had extended to us. We were not allowed to view the main dining room even when we promised not to pilfer the china or silverware. I will not set up or lead a group back there any time soon. Lunch at the 100 Fighter Group Restaurant was splendid and hosted by owner Bob Scofield, and a great staff with World War II cuisine.

Then a pleasant surprise when we discovered a gem at the Akron/Canton Airport, in a converted hanger called the Maps, Air Museum. The place is run by veteran Dennis Dickey and a team of military volunteers. We will plan a return visit here and even the possibility of having them bring a program to us in perhaps 2011. In May we also attended our 7th annual Memorial Day Parade and the Willoughby Cemetery. **President Byrne, President Elect Terry Reynolds, Jet Tirpak, Theo Karle** and **Franco Michael** were present. July brought us our 5th annual picnic at the **Byrne Plantation**. **Arlan** will reflect on this event with a repeat visit by the 51st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. In September **Norty London**, with a cameo by **Ted Karle** prepared us for our October 1-4, Fall Field Trip. We returned to Richmond and the Virginia Crossings Resort. Hosted by our own **Brent Morgan** and **Park Ranger Robert E. L. Krick**. We studied North Anna, Cold Harbor, Yellow Tavern and much more in clearly another outstanding trip. October gave us the return of **Dr. Robert Stabile** who proved both sides of the "Southern Cause for Independence." He did so rather convincingly. In November **Mark Minor** told us more than we ever knew about **Thomas Custer** (2 time Medal of Honor winner) and his illegitimate son. It was good to see a healthy **Frank Moore** and **Les West** back in December at the **Richard L. McElroy** program.

I will introduce the 2nd part of my "Do you know your Lincoln" quiz? Be ready to celebrate the 16th Presidents 201st birthday at our February 9th meeting. Here is a medium difficulty yet challenging sample question:

In what year did Lincoln first take an oath of office in Washington D.C.?

We all hope to see **Norton London** in January and anyone else having health issues prior to this past holiday season. **Norty** is a trooper and usually never misses 2 straight meetings.

In the spring of 2003, I purchased a 2004 Jeep Grand Cherokee at Junction Auto in Chardon, Ohio. Why is that worthy of mention? I added some extra features from the parts department manager. It was there I first met **Carl Dodaro**, who has become a good friend. You will get to know this 3rd year member as a personable, generous and humble man. We realized that we shared a strong passion for Civil War history. He was excited to learn **Edwin C. Bearss** is an honorary member of our NEOCWRT, so he attended our November 2005 meeting to see the "Pied Piper of the Civil War." **Carl** and I also share a strong interest in the music industry dating back to the 1950's. He is a pro active individual who contributes to the **Courier** on a regular basis. I am proud to have sponsored **Carl**. His talk will be called "The Every Day Life of the Civil War Soldier."

Membership Dues: This is a good time to start thinking about paying your 2010 dues. The fees are now held constant at **\$55.00** for the 3rd straight year. Make your check payable to **NEOCWRT!** **Happy New Year**

"The Battle of the Crater" by Arlan Byrne

This article will examine how the North tried to end the Civil War in 1864 and how petty jealousies, racial prejudices, poor planning. Political correctness, drunken ambition, and personality flaws prevented it.

Part I - The Problem

As the men of the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment lay in their hot, dirty, dangerous trenches in early June, 1864, outside of Petersburg and stared across the bare no man's land at the Confederate trenches and that little hill with the four murderous cannon on it; they thought about all that had happened to them in the last 3 months.

They had been with the Union Army of the Potomac when it left the area of Washington in the spring of 1864. Their new commander, General Ulysses S. Grant, was the latest in a long string of army commanders and he seemed to have impressive credentials. However, the men in the ranks were skeptical. "Sure" they muttered, "he has won a string of victories in the west - Shiloh, Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge. etc.; but he hasn't met Bobbie Lee yet". Nevertheless, Grant had assembled a huge army of 100,000 men and mountains of supplies and started south with the objectives of defeating the 50,000 man army of Confederate General Robert E Lee, capturing Richmond, Va. the capitol of the Confederacy, and ending the war. But it hadn't quite worked out that way. Every time they attacked Lee's army, the Confederates were in a fortified defensive trench line with hidden riflemen and cannons and they shot the Union troops down by the thousands.* The cannon were the worst. They fired bags of small iron balls called 'canister' like a huge shotgun, blowing away whole companies of men at a time. It had happened at the battle of the Wilderness, again at Spotsylvania and North Anna, and finally at Cold Harbor. The Cold Harbor Battle seemed to be the worst. It was brutal and unnecessary. Seven thousand northern men had fallen in a few hours, for no apparent reason; and with no apparent gain.



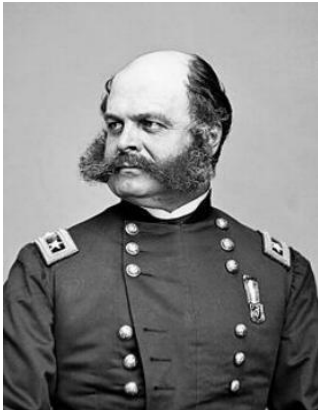
General U. S. Grant

The dread of another Cold Harbor haunted the thoughts and affected the decisions and behavior of the officers and men of the Union Army for the rest of the war. After every one of these battles Grant had tried to slip around Lee's right and get between him and Richmond. But he couldn't do it. Lee was too good a general and he always got to a good defensive position first. When the campaign started Grant knew he had to defeat Lee before Lee was driven into the really elaborate defensive lines around Petersburg and Richmond, or the war would settle into a siege. And, as the men of the 48th standing in their trenches before those elaborate Petersburg defenses in early June knew; he hadn't.

By the summer of 1864 the Union army had suffered over 50,000 casualties since the campaign began. This was more men than in Lee's whole Army. After the battle of Cold Harbor people were so shocked at the huge casualty lists that public opinion began to turn against the Government's war policy. The movement for a negotiated peace grew stronger than ever. In fact, Lincoln himself became convinced he would lose the upcoming fall election. So everybody in the northern army was trying to think of a way to get through the rebel defensive trench lines, past those deadly cannons and put an end to the war. Then, as the men of the 48th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, 2nd Division,

9th Corps, of the Union army looked at that little hill with those 4 terrible cannon on it; an idea began to form. Why not dig a tunnel under that hill, which was called 'Elliott's Salient' after General Stephan Elliott who commanded the South Carolina troops there, and blow the thing up? It was only 100 yards away. Then without those awful cannons, the army could charge practically unopposed into Petersburg, split Lee's Confederate army in half and win the war. It should be easy to dig a tunnel. After all, the 48th had been recruited from Schuylkill County Pennsylvania which was in the middle of coal country. These men had been digging tunnels following veins of anthracite coal all their lives. When their commander, Colonel Henry Pleasants, heard their idea on June 23rd, he became excited. He had been born in Argentina in 1833. His father was an American gun runner who had married a local girl; but when his father died in 1846, Henry was sent to Philadelphia to live with his uncle. His uncle had seen to it that Henry had gotten a good education and a job with the Pennsylvania Railroad where his job was to dig tunnels for them. One of them was the famous 'Sand Patch Tunnel' which was 4,500 feet long. So, by the time the war started, he probably knew more about digging tunnels than any man in America. A 500 foot tunnel under no man's land to Elliott's Salient would be easy for him. The next day, June 24th, he drew up a plan and took it to his commander,

the commander of the 2nd division, General Robert Potter. Before the war Potter had been a successful New York attorney and he knew absolutely nothing about tunnels. But he had been with Grant at the siege of Vicksburg the year before and had watched the construction of some tunnels there. Those tunnels had failed and did nothing to end the siege, but Potter was intrigued with this tunnel idea and he took it to the commander of the IX Corp, General Ambrose Burnside. General Burnside was an enigma. He was an outstanding organizer and a capable corps commander; but something always seemed to happen to him when the pressure of command grew too great. When things didn't go exactly according to plan, he appeared to withdraw into himself and lose interest in what was happening. Apparently he was unable to adjust rapidly to changing military conditions in battles. His performances at Antietam and Fredericksburg seemed to bear this out. But at this time capable corps commanders were in short supply in the Army of the Potomac; so Burnside was put in command of the smallest corps in the army, the IX corp. Burnside knew he was not well liked by his superiors and he thought the tunnel idea might help his career if it worked. So, the next day, June 26th, he approved the plan and passed it along to army headquarters. When Generals Meade and Grant got it they asked Major James Duane, the head of the army engineers his opinion of the plan. After some initial study Duane flatly refused to have anything to do with the project. According to Pleasants plan, the tunnel would have to be 500 feet long in order to get under Elliott's Salient. Duane said it couldn't be done. If the tunnel didn't collapse and bury the diggers, the confederates would be sure to discover it and dig counter tunnels to prevent it being used. Plus there was no way to get fresh air to the end of a tunnel that long. And even if the four horrible cannon on the top of Elliott's Salient were destroyed, other nearby cannon covered the same no man's land and any attack would fail. Besides, the Army manual said it couldn't be done, so it couldn't be done. The army engineer corps was not going to waste any time, money or equipment on such a harebrained idea.



General Ambrose Burnside

But Grant had a big problem. He had been reading the northern newspapers. He knew the dissatisfaction the huge casualty rates had caused in the general population, especially in an election year. Even Mary Todd, the president's wife had called Grant a butcher. Then last week he had had an unexpected visitor. On Tuesday, June 21, Lincoln had showed up at army headquarters unannounced. Grant took him on a brief tour and assured the President the army would not leave until it had captured Petersburg and Richmond. The President expressed his confidence in Grant, as always, but then just before he left, he dropped the bombshell. He said "I cannot pretend to advice, but I hope all may be accomplished with as little bloodshed as possible". The message was clear. There would be NO more frontal assaults. There would be NO more Cold Harbors. Grant had to find another way to break the Confederate defensive lines. The tunnel idea was worth a try after all.

[Note* This trench warfare problem was not solved until the end of the First World War 50 years later with the invention of the tank]

The Courier is the monthly newsletter of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table

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THE “NUTS AND BOLTS” OF THE CIVIL WAR COMPILED BY CARL DODARO

Civil War historians seem to always assume that the reader knows what a division or brigade is in most of the military books I've read over the years. I'm never sure of what size a Brigade or a Division is or who should be in command, so that prompted a look into this month's "Nuts And Bolts" for some definitions of Civil War military units and who was in charge of each unit.

INFANTRY UNITS.

- I. SQUAD – (10 to 15 men) Commanded** by a Corporal.
- II. COMPANY – (50 to 100 men) Commanded** by a Captain; A company has the following officers (commissioned and non-coms): one Captain, one 1st. Lieut., and one 2nd. Lieut., one 1st Sergeant. 4 Sergeants, and eight Corporals, plus 2 musicians. -- When the company was divided or platooned, the captain commanded one and the 1st Lieut. the other. There was a sergeant for each section of 25 men, and a corporal for each squad. The 1st Sgt. "ran" the whole company. Each company was required to have an official letter (or number, omitting the letter "J" which looked too much like the letter "I") designation for purposes of keeping records: e.g., Company B / 4th Ohio Volunteers. Many had colorful local names such as the Cleveland Grays, Clinch Rifles, and the Davis Guard.
- III. BATTALION (400 to 800 men) and REGIMENT (800 to 1,200 men) -** Battalions and regiments were formed by organizing companies together. In the volunteers (Union and Confederate), 10 companies would be organized together into a regiment. The regiment was commanded by a Colonel. A regiment has the following staff (one of each): Colonel. Lt. Colonel.; Major; Adjutant (1st Lieut); Surgeon (Major.); Asst. Surgeon (Capt.); Quartermaster (Lieut); Commissary (Lieut);Sgt-Major; and a Quartermaster Sgt.; all Regiments were usually known by a number. --- There were also volunteer organizations containing less than 10 companies: if they contained from 4-8 companies, they were called battalions, and usually were commanded by a Major or Lieutenant Colonel. The Civil War soldier reserved his greatest attachment and pride for his Regiment. Usually composed of men from the same area and acquainted with each other in civilian life, the Regiment became their wartime home. Union authorities organized 2,144 Infantry Regiments, the Confederates raised 642 Infantry Regiments. State governments were responsible for recruiting, organizing, and often rudimentary training. State authorities designated each Regiment, once organized, by number: i.e., 1st Virginia Volunteer Infantry. The War attested to the fighting prowess of these volunteer Regiments, their casualty lists to the fury of that prowess. The 5th New Hampshire earned the grievous distinction of suffering more total casualties than any Union Infantry Regiment, the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery suffered the largest loss in a single engagement (635 at Petersburg, June 18, 1864) while for the Confederates, the 1st Texas lost the largest percentage of men (82.3% at Antietam). In the end, the tattered Regimental Flags symbolized searing combat and unwavering devotion.
- IV. BRIGADE (4000 men) -** A brigade is formed from 3 to 6 regiments and commanded by a Brigadier General. The South tended to use more regiments than the North, thus having bigger brigades. At some times in the war, some artillery would be attached to the infantry brigade. Each brigade would also have a varying number of staff officers attending to the Brigadier General, including his aide, the Quartermaster, ordnance and commissary officers, an inspector, and one or more clerks. The Brigade's effectiveness depended on Regimental and Company commanders instructing their men in the complicated maneuvers of the period, and on each Regiment coordinating its movements with the others under the Brigade commander. Some Brigades became justly famous during the War. The Stonewall Brigade was one of Lee's best units as was Hood's Texas Brigade. Western Confederate Brigades included the Orphan Brigade of Kentucky and the 1ST Missouri Brigade. On the Union side, the Iron Brigade earned fame in the Army of the Potomac as did the Philadelphia Brigade. Wilder's Lightning Brigade of mounted infantry combined infantry and cavalry tactics to become one of the best Union units.
- V. DIVISION (12,000 men) -** A division is commanded by a Major General and is composed of from 2 to 6 brigades. In the North usually 3 or 4, but in the South normally 4 to 6. Thus, a Southern division tended to be almost twice as large as its Northern counterpart, if the regiments are about the same size. Each division would also have a varying number of staff officers. The frontage of an average 1863 Union Division, drawn up in double-rank line of battle with no skirmishers deployed, would have been just short of a mile in length.
- VI. CORPS. -** A corps is commanded by a Major General (Union) or a Lieutenant General (Confederate) and is composed of from 2 to 4 divisions. Again the North tended to have 2 or 3, while the South had 3 or 4. Each corps would also have a varying number of staff officers. Corps were established in the Union Army in March 1862 by Major General Geo. McClellan and the Union created 43 Corps by the end of the War. Each Union Corps was designated by a number, written in the Roman numeral style (I Corps, XXV Corps), while Confederate Corps, though numbered, and were usually known by the name of their commander. Thus, the II Corps was called Jackson's Corps, even after "Stonewall" was killed.
- VII. ARMIES. -** Corps within a geographic department were aggregated into Armies. The number of Corps in an Army could vary considerably: sometimes an Army would contain only 1 Corps and other times as many as 8. Armies were commanded by Major Generals in the North, and usually by full Generals in the South. Each Army would also have a varying number of staff officers. Armies were the largest operational organizations and were usually named for the region in which they were found, Union Armies for the main river in the area, Confederates for states or regions. There were 16 Union and 23 Confederate Armies created during the War.

It is important to understand that most Civil War units in the field were only at 20% to 50% of their full strength, especially later in the war. Thus, while in theory a company contained 100 men, and would be recruited at that size. However, due to illness and battle casualties, a company was rarely ever at full strength. Frequently units would find themselves commanded by officer one or two grades below the rank he should have for that job (e.g., a regiment commanded by a Lt. Colonel or Major). Listed above are the authorized strengths and not the numbers that were actually in the field. The percentage in the Confederate Regiments was usually higher due to their system of assigning recruits to existing Regiments, whereas the Union created new Regiments.

Book Review by Joe Tirpak

“Bull’s Eyes and Misfires”, by Clint Johnson, Rutledge Press, 2002

GENERAL TURNER ASHBY

“His Daring was Proverbial”

1828-1862

In the December issue of [THE COURIER](#) I reported a “Bull’s Eye” regarding Union Major *Jonathan Letterman* as one of 50 people selected by author Clint Johnson whose contribution helped shape the Civil War. In this issue I report on a “Misfire” by General Turner Ashby of the Confederacy.

First a brief biographical sketch is in order. *Turner Ashby* was born on October 23, 1838 near Markham, Virginia in upper Fauquier County. An excellent horseman, he displayed his talent at an early age. In the spring of 1861 he came under the command of Colonel Thomas J. Jackson. He quickly rose to become Lt. Colonel of the 7th Virginia Cavalry and exercised independent command of his unit. He quickly taxed Jackson’s patience even though he was bold and fearless. His leadership traits were reckless and undisciplined.

While Jackson was patient with Ashby’s lack of discipline in his ranks he also recognized Ashby’s invaluable knowledge of the Shenandoah Valley. None-the-less, Jackson became increasingly irritated with the lack of discipline within the 7th Virginia Cavalry.



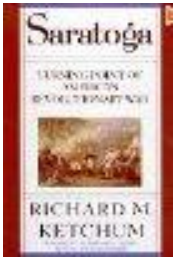
Gen. Turner Ashby

Our story begins with the only major “Misfire” of Turner Ashby’s brief but illustrious career. In mid-March of 1862 Jackson was badly defeated in the battle of Kernstown, Virginia. Here is how this story unfolded. Early in the Civil War, General George McClellan made the capture of Richmond the key to defeating the Confederacy. He began his slow March on Richmond. As he marched up the Valley he believed his troops were badly outnumbered. He repeatedly asked Washington for more reinforcements. Faulty intelligence had indicated to McClellan that he was outnumbered two to one when in fact he had 30,000 troops to Jackson’s 4,500. President Lincoln on the other hand was reluctant to release the 25,000 additional troops in the Winchester area requested by McClellan because of its proximity to Washington, D.C. This early conflict between Lincoln and McClellan ultimately escalated and led to his dismissal.

What was Turner Ashby’s Misfire?

He made the mistake of believing a rumor instead of checking it out. He trusted the people of Winchester regarding McClellan’s troop movements and troop strength and thereby endangered his unit as well as Jackson’s command. Jackson was badly defeated. His troops were driven from the field. However, this defeat of Jackson caused Lincoln to take 50,000 Federal troops out of the Peninsula campaign to capture Richmond. The irony of this scouting mistake by Ashby that almost wiped Jackson’s command from the Valley was that this same man had convinced the North that Jackson was invincible. Two weeks later Turner Ashby was killed. Jackson’s eulogy of Ashby: “His daring was proverbial; his powers of endurance almost incredible; his tone of character heroic; and his sagacity almost intuitive...” Thus, we have one of the great ironies of the Civil War. Turner Ashby, a hero in death and Jackson’s eulogy that ignored the “Misfire.”

Saratoga by Richard M. Ketchum Book Review by Tom Horvath



The battle of Saratoga may very well have been the turning point of the American Revolution, as Mr. Ketchum asserts in the subtitle of this book. The rebel victory was a major psychological boost, proving that the Continental Army was more disciplined, braver, and more effective than the British forces believed. It certainly led to France joining the United States in the war, which was critical to our victory.

Mr. Ketchum does a thorough job of analyzing the campaign that led to this critical battle. He describes the relationships among the key British players and how the strategy developed. He also explains how a critical part of the plan, one of the major objectives, was not clearly communicated and how that played a role in the events.

On the rebel side, he explains how a recommendation to occupy a critical hill was ignored until too late. As a result, General Arthur St. Clair abandoned Fort Ticonderoga without a battle. Ticonderoga was considered the key to colonial defense in the north, and its position on the Lake Champlain, Lake George, Hudson River waterway connection between Canada and New York City certainly was critical. St. Clair was severely criticized for backing away and ultimately was relieved of his command. Yet, Mr. Ketchum explains how his subsequent tactics put his successor, General Horatio Gates, in position to defeat Burgoyne.

Along with an emphasis on how personality impacts strategy and battles, there are numerous short biographical sketches of key persona. And there were a great number of interesting people involved, from Baroness von Riedesel, who accompanied her German General husband during the campaign, to “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne, the British commander. Mr. Ketchum seems to treat everyone with an even hand, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, brilliant moves and mistakes.

In the case of Burgoyne, understanding him helps to understand his decisions, which were critical to how the campaign played out. This is also true of other important people, like General John Stark, the hero of the Battle of Bennington. Other people’s backgrounds are mildly interesting, but have no real influence on their actions or the story. I sometimes got the feeling that their backgrounds were included simply because the author had the information.

If that kind of information is your cup of tea, then there is a wealth of it in this volume. On the other hand, if your only interest is the battles, you’ll have to be patient, or skip around in the 450 pages of narrative. The first 100 pages are all politics and personalities leading up to the campaign. The campaign begins, but there are no battles for another 50 pages, and that is the non-battle for Fort Ticonderoga. In short, for a book that is ostensibly about the battle of Saratoga, this one is long on background, politics, and biography, and short on action.

Mr. Ketchum’s writing is straightforward and easy to read. He includes a half dozen well drawn maps that cover all of the major actions and a section of portraits. The 540 pages include an extensive bibliography, notes section, and index. Compared to most of the books I’ve reviewed this is an older one, published in 1997. There are newer volumes available on the subject.

The hardbound edition retailed for \$30.00, but the book is now available in paperback (\$13.60 on Amazon). The Mentor Public Library and Clevnet system each have one copy.

A Note from the President: Arlan Byrne

I would like to thank all the wonderful members who helped make this past year a successful one for our club. Joe Tirpak deserves big thanks for arranging an outstanding group of monthly speakers. Franco has more about this in his column.

Our first outside club event this year was the Spring Field Trip to Canton. Franco arranged a visit to the First Ladies Museum in the morning and to MAPS - a Military Aircraft Museum - in the afternoon. Personally I liked the MAPS Museum best. Those old airplanes were awesome. I wouldn't mind going back there again.

Over 50 people attended our summer picnic. The 51st OVI Reenactors showed up again and this time they brought along their band to play civil war music for us. For me, one of the highlights of the afternoon [besides watching Franco and Norty do the manual of arms], was when the lady reenactors dressed Lee Karle up in civil war era ladies clothing from her underwear out to her dress with all the petticoats and bustles, etc. in between. Then, after the picnic was over, everybody pitched in and took down, folded up, and packed away all the tables, chairs, tents, etc. in record time. Thanks guys.

For our Fall Field Trip this year we went back to the Virginia Crossings Hotel and followed Grant's 1864 Overland campaign. Norty London, Brent Morgan and their people did another fantastic job. The guide, Robert E. Lee Krick, was outstanding, the tour bus was a great idea and the weather was perfect. I still can't understand how Norty is always able to control the weather for these field trips. Well, except for one time at Petersburg!

Our final special event this year was Ladies Night. We had dinner music to go along with the wine, the flowers and the special menu. An added twist to the book raffle was an extra table of books of interest to women. A good idea; thanks Bob.

I would like to thank John Sandy, who has made our monthly newsletter, the "Courier", into the best damn newsletter in the history of Civil War Roundtables. I would also like to thank Steve Abby who probably has one of the toughest jobs in the club. He not only greets members at the door at every meeting and takes the dinner money; he makes sure everything comes out right and the meeting runs on schedule. And, I would like to thank all the guys who run the book raffle for all their work. I would like to thank Bob Baucher for his monthly "This day in the Civil War" series; and Bill Meisner for his contributions. Plus, all the club members who were monthly speakers deserve a special commendation for the huge amount of time and effort they put into making our club meetings exceptional. I would also like to thank Treasurer Bill Wilson and Vice President Terry Reynolds for their contributions.

Every month when I would show up at the meeting; the podium, flags, microphone, etc. were all magically in place and ready to go. Then, after the meeting everything would magically disappear until the next meeting. I would like to thank all the magicians who make this happen and tell them how much I appreciated their magic. People like Ted Karle, Ron Morgan, and Mike Sears, among others. I would also like to thank George Grim and Frank Yannuchi for their personal kindness to me.

The attitude of all the members of our club is marvelous and I can honestly say that I have never asked anybody in the club for anything, or to do anything, and was refused. If I have missed thanking anyone who contributed to the success of the club this year, and I'm sure I have; please let me know. I apologize sincerely.

Finally, I want to welcome all our new members and I hope they enjoyed themselves. And last, I have to say that being President of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable is a snap. Everybody is so cooperative and helpful, there is practically nothing for the President to do; and I was able to fulfill one of my life long ambitions. I was able to pick up a gavel, bang it on the table, and say, " Meeting Adjourned!"

Arlan Byrne