



THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday, March 13th, 2012 Meeting #125

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

Guest Speaker: Herman Rueger

Topic: "Our Early Cleveland History"

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

Reservations required Please call Mike Sears

Phone 440 257 3956 e-Mail: mikeanddonnas@roadrunner.com

Herman C. Ruegar was born in Erie, Pa. and is a graduate of Kent State University with a degree in Elementary Education. He taught 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades in the Wickliffe School System and spent many of his summers working for the National Park Service. He worked for 13 years at Jamestown and Yorktown, Virginia and later was assigned to the Gettysburg National Battlefield Park. For 14 years he operated a card and souvenir shop. Since 1992, he has volunteered his time at the River's Bend Parks Corporation.

Cleveland, Ohio was founded in 1796 by Moses Cleaveland, an enterprising, New England real estate developer who believed the south shore of Lake Erie, near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, was a great location to build a settlement. Cleaveland and a group of surveyors from the **Connecticut Land Company** came to this area to portion out the lands of the Western Reserve into townships. The surveyors laid out the plans for a central city, with a town square, modeled after those in many New England towns of that period. However, the Connecticut land developers first had to square away things with the local Iroquois population. Rumor has it that Cleaveland and his consortium paid the local inhabitants: **2 beef cattle, 100 gallons of whiskey and \$500 in New York State currency** for all the land on the eastern bank of the Cuyahoga River. (Editor's note: Cleaveland would be the first in a long list of famous personalities like LeBron James, Manny Ramirez and Jim Tome, to come to Northeast Ohio and suddenly decide to leave for more fame and treasure!) Moses left the Western Reserve in the autumn of 1796, never to return.

Lorenzo Carter, the first English speaking settler of Northeast Ohio, built a log cabin on the eastern bank of the Cuyahoga. Carter, a Baptist, is credited with constructing the first tavern in the area. He also had the distinction of building the first wood frame house in the Cleveland settlement. But the structure caught fire shortly after being completed and was totally destroyed. Fortunately, Lorenzo and his family escaped the inferno.

Please join us for an interesting presentation exploring the history of Cleveland, Ohio and many unusual stories about its earliest settlers.

CIVIL WAR JOURNAL by Franco M. Sperrazzo March 13, 2012

February 14th Meeting, Dr. Phillip Price: Brother Phil, as we name our friend Phillip Price, asked Joe Tirpak, the Program Chair & Yours Truly, the Program Coordinator to critique his presentation. This was the first time he had presented: the “Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Mission”. Dr. Phil was concerned with whether his introduction was relevant. It certainly was, and since the location of his story is located near the area where he grew up, it made it even more interesting. Dr. Price is a graduate of Miami of Ohio and the story of his interest in Civil War history had to be told.

He presented a detailed, timeline of events that occurred in and around Oberlin, a town where the Underground Railroad was predominant. Upwards of 2000 residents of that vicinity aided some 5000 fugitive slaves to escape to freedom. The Underground Railroad escape routes utilized a system of coded signs. The natural elements of Ohio’s cold winters were helpful to the escaped slaves, but not always reliable. Whether the Ohio River was frozen over or not, could determine the success of the escape.

We learned the story of John Price’s disappearance and how 37 local citizens were sentenced to 3 months in jail for being sympathizers and providing aid along the escape routes. Dr. Price **quoted the Bible, Jeremiah 18, which examines: if you do not free all the slaves, be prepared to suffer “the Wrath of God.”** Dr. Price covered the Dred Scott Decision of 1858; Lincoln’s adversary Roger Taney; and Harriet Beecher Stowe, who lived in the Cincinnati area for over 18 years. Her masterpiece, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” sold over 30,000 copies within 1 month of its release. There was a 15-20 minute documentary movie featuring Betty Campbell, a descendent of Alexander Campbell. Historian James Horton was featured and the important John Rankin House, on the shores of the Ohio River across the foothills of the Kentucky border. It was difficult to end this interesting talk because there is so much more than imagined to be understood. We have come to expect excellence from our colleague Dr. Phillip Price. Last month our 33 members and guests learned a great deal from his well paced special presentation. Sorry President Steve Abbey could not be present, he was struggling on the greens and fairways of Florida golf courses. He was also spending quality time with First Lady Roberta.



Above left: Franco is a “picket” facing a frontal assault .

Above right Ted Karle, Ed Bearss, Franco Sperrazzo and George Deutsch

Membership Dues for 2012: This is the 3rd notice, so if you have not yet paid your dues, please do so at our meeting on Tuesday, March 13th, 2012. Anyone who has not paid their dues by April 1st, will no longer be considered a member and be forced to watch “Glee” on Tuesday evenings ! Make your check payable to NEOCWRT and present it separately to Treasurer, Bill Meissner at the dinner meeting entrance. You may mail your check to Bill Meissner at: 9571 Headlands Road, Mentor, OH 44060. Mike Sears, Sergeant of Arms will collect \$24.00 the cost for our splendid Dino’s family style dinner. **Ed Bearss will be coming to the NEOCWRT for our May Meeting!**

National Park Service of Lawnfield & Mentor Library Presents: Major Battles of the Civil War. This month the topic on March 14th, will be the “Battle of Hampton Roads”. This is a naval battle that occurred 150 years ago on March 8-9th. It featured the warships USS Merrimack and rechristened CSS Virginia. Garfield Home Park Historian and soon to be NEOCWRT member Scott Longert, will present the battle program in the lower level Garfield Room. Time including Q & A is noon until 1:15pm. Bring your lunch if you like. Location is: 8215 Mentor Avenue, call 440-255-8811, to make a reservation.

Lakeland Community College Celebrates the Civil War: Later this month the Willoughby based College will host an event on America’s greatest internal civil conflict. Our own United States Army Veteran & Patriot Bill Koeckert will offer details on this special event at our meeting.

Memorial Service for Patricia Byrne: As mentioned unfortunately at our Feb 14th meeting, Arlan’s wife passed away on Feb 11th. Many members and spouses attended her funeral and a memorial service to honor her memory one week later. Pat and Arlan have always been contributors to the good of our club. They hosted our Summer Picnics from 2005-2009. We were fortunate to have her at our 2011 Holiday Party. She would have turned 64 years young this month. We celebrate her life that ended much too soon.

Special Note: NEOCWRT I. D. Member Cards: As we transition into spring, remember to use our club I. D. cards to offer to potential speakers for our programs and future members. Current President Steve Abbey, has dozens of (you fill in the blanks with purpose) NEOCWRT I.D. cards for members use.

2012 Officers of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table

President: Steve Abbey **Sergeant of Arms:** Mike Sears **Web Site:** Tom Horvath
Vice President: Carl Dodaro **Treasurer:** Bill Meissner **Program Chairman:** Joe Tirpak
Secretary: Carl Dodaro

Past Presidents of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table

Joe E. Tirpak *	1998	John A. Sandy	2005
Bob Baucher *	1999	Brent Morgan	2006
Norton London *	2000	J. Michael Sears	2007
Bob Bayless *	2001	Bill Meissner	2008
Dr. Bob Battisti *	2002	Arlan Byrne	2009
Frank Yannucci *	2003	Terry Reynolds	2010
Ted Karle	2004	Franco M. Sperrazzo	2011

* Indicates Club Founder

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

John A. Sandy Editor

Staff writers: Franco Sperrazzo Carl Dodaro Ted Karle Tom Horvath Norton London

Arlan Byrne Bill Meissner Dr. R. Stabile Joseph Tirpak Scott Hagara

Richmond, Virginia Correspondent: Brent Morgan

PRIVATEERS, COMMERCE RAIDERS OR PIRATES, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

COMPILED BY CARL DODARO

PROCLAMATION BY JEFFERSON DAVIS

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

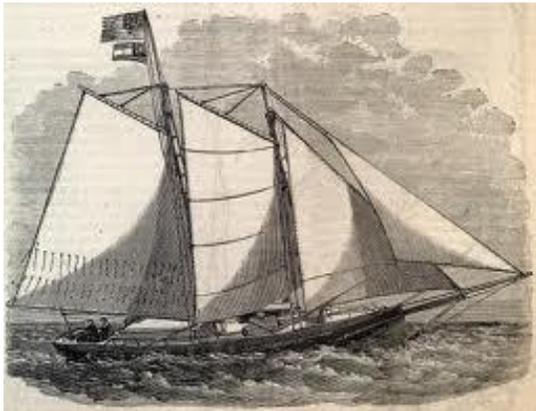
APRIL 17, 1861

Whereas Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, has announced his intention of invading the Confederacy with an armed force, for the purpose of capturing its fortresses, and thereby subverting its independence, and subjecting its free people to the dominion of a foreign power; and whereas it has become the duty of this government to repel the threatened invasion, and defend the rights and liberties of the people by all means which the laws of nations and the usages of civilized warfare place at its disposal;

Now, therefore, I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, do issue this my proclamation, inviting all those who may desire by armed service in private vessels on the high seas to aid this government in resisting so wanton and wicked aggression, to make application for commissions or letters of marque and reprisal, to be issued under the seal of these Confederate States.

And I do further notify all persons applying for letters of marque to make a statement in writing, giving the name and suitable description of the character, tonnage and force of the vessel, the name of the place of residence of each owner concerned therein, and the intended number of the crew, and to sign each statement and deliver the same to the Secretary of State or Collector of the port of entry of these Confederate States, to be by him transmitted to the Secretary of State.

And with this proclamation, Jefferson Davis asked for the help of the privateer in defeating the United States. A privateer, or privateering was a means for a weaker nation to strike at the enemy's commerce without having to build a large naval force of its own. The incentive for private citizens to attempt this (arms their vessels and capture enemy vessels) was primarily profit. Although the privateers were privately owned and armed, they held a commission (letter of marque) from the belligerent government. That commission was the only distinction between privateering and piracy. Otherwise, as was often the case historically, privateering degenerated into piracy.

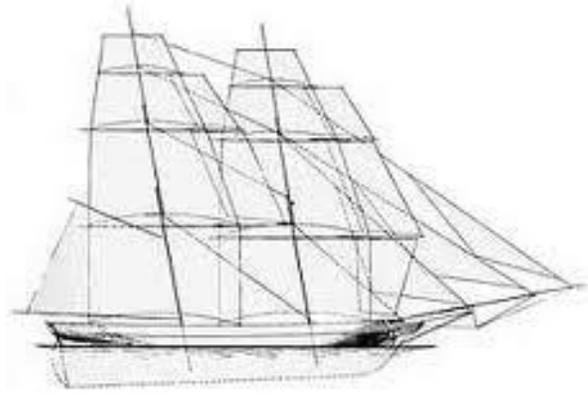


Interestingly, privateering was outlawed by the Declaration of Paris in 1856, which stated among other things – 1.- privateering is, and remains abolished; 2.- the neutral flag covers enemy's goods, with the exception of contraband of war; 3.- Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war, are not liable to capture under enemy's flag 4.- Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective, that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy ... The present Declaration is not and shall not be binding except between those Powers who have acceded, or shall accede, to it – signed by the U.K., Austria-Hungary, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia and the Ottoman Empire – but not the United States. (**Drawing of the CSS Savannah**)

Although in 1861, privateering was still believed to be a powerful weapon, it was abandoned within a year. This was due to two actions that limited privateers overall value. First was the careful action of the Confederacy. In order to insure the acceptance of their nation as legitimate, it was essential to the Confederate government that its actions were careful and in accordance with law. The decision was made from the start that commissions would only be issue to actual vessels present within Confederate borders. There would be no trading of commissions and no piracy under the guise of the Confederate commissions. With all of the problems to be faced by the new nation, respectability would not be sacrificed and the leaders were determined to establish a “legitimate state”.

Second, there was a lack of profit to balance the risk taken by privateers. This was due to the British proclamation early in the war of neutrality. According to law and custom, the owners of privateers kept the profits from the sale of captured vessels and their cargoes. After the paying of shares to the crew, and a tax to the government, which in the case of the Confederacy equaled one twentieth of the total value, the profits made up for the risk taken and funds invested. However, the prize had to get to a properly constituted court. With the declaration of neutrality by the British and its acceptance by

the other European powers, the Confederate privateers had to reach a Southern port in order to appear before a “properly constituted court”. This meant that the privateer had to get by the Union blockade to hunt; it had to avoid Union warships and capture prizes and then get the prizes back through the Union blockade before one could possibly see a profit in the venture. In the end, the Confederates did not realize the profits they sought and the privateers that were not captured or destroyed by the Union were, for the most part, commissioned into the regular Confederate Navy or turned to blockade-running.



Privateering was only one form of commerce raiding and Confederate States Secretary of the Navy Mallory would commission Confederate warships to carry out offensive actions against Union commerce. In the end, these raiders would be better suited to harm northern commerce than privateers had been. In the hope that Union Secretary of Navy Welles would have no choice but to divert warships from the blockade, Mallory knew he needed ships that could not be built in the south. These commerce raiders would have to spend long periods of time at sea, with no home ports to return to. Cargoes would be burned or sunk after removing usable supplies. If the cargoes of American ships belonged to foreign nationals, the ships would be released on a ransom bond, payable to the Confederacy at the end of

the war. With commerce destruction, not defeat of the Union Navy, as its objective, Confederate cruisers were told not to engage the enemy unless absolutely necessary. The key difference between privateers and Confederate Navy cruisers was one of motivation. Above all, Confederate naval captains were motivated by patriotism rather than the promise of easy riches. (**Drawing of the CSS Jefferson Davis above**)

This article is the combination of two papers written about Confederate Naval Strategy –

Letters of Marque by William C. Lowe which I found on ehistory.com: U.S. CIVIL WAR: “A NATION DIVIDED”: May 2000 issue and *Naval Strategy During The American Civil War – a Research Report Submitted to the Faculty of the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, April 1999* by Colonel David J. Murphy, USAF



*“In Great Deeds something abides.
On great fields something stays. Forms change and pass;
bodies disappear; but spirits linger, to consecrate ground for the vision
place of souls. And reverent men and women from afar, and
generations that know us not and that we know not of, heart – drawn
to see where and by whom great things were suffered and done for
them, shall come to this deadless field to ponder and dream; and lo!
the shadow of a mighty presence shall wrap them in its bosom, and
the power of the vision pass into their souls. “*

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

THE BATTLE OF BALL'S BLUFF

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS *

Arlan Byrne

CAST: General Charles P. Stone, Commander of the Union Army of Observation stationed on the northern bank of the Potomac river about 25 miles west of Washington D.C.

Colonel Charles P. Devens, commander of the 15th Massachusetts Infantry, Army of Observation

Captain Chase Philbrick, member of the 15th Massachusetts Infantry

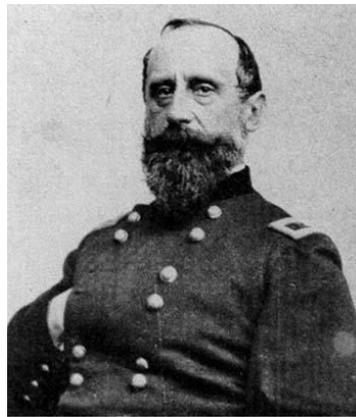
Colonel Devens Orderly

New York Herald Reporter

Photographs below from the USAMI



General Charles Stone



Colonel Charles Devens



Ball's Bluff

- **Note: some literary license was employed by the author**

ACT I – SCENE I - Early afternoon of October 20th, 1861

The curtain rises on the inside of a rude log cabin. On the back wall there is a window with sunlight streaming through it. There are also pictures of General George B McClellan, President Abraham Lincoln and Massachusetts Governor John Andrew hanging on the wall along with a sign saying “Headquarters – 15th Massachusetts Infantry”. There is a rude wood table front left with a bottle of scotch and a box of cigars on it and four chairs grouped around it. There is a wooden door in the right rear wall with a filing cabinet next to it. Two men, a General and a Colonel sit on opposite sides of the table drinking single malt scotch.

General Stone speaks: “Ummpf...Charles, you should have been there. It was the most magnificent review I have ever seen. 10,000 troops – infantry, cavalry and artillery; all in perfect alignment. There were Generals, politicians and beautiful well bred ladies from all over the world there. Ummpf.....I tell you,... General McClellan is building the greatest army in the world. What a difference from that ragtag bunch that ran away and disgraced us at Bull Run. And Mac has done it all in three months!.....Ummpf.”

Colonel Devens: “Well sir, I’m glad he got rid of those miserable three month volunteers and started over. Now all our troops have volunteered for three years or the duration of the war and they are anxious to fight the rebels. Also changing the name of our army from the Army of Northern Virginia to the Army of the Potomac has raised their spirits. My men are eager to have a go at those traitors.”

Gen Stone: “.....Umfpyes,....well, he has fortified Washington and extended our defensive line along the northern bank of the Potomac River. Now that the north is safe from attack, we can get on with the business of winning the war.....Umpf..... Charles,..... this scotch is magnificent. Where did you get it?”

Devens: “My quartermaster got it for me when he was in Washington last week.”

Stone: laughing, “A good man!”

Both men raise their glasses in a toast when there is a knock at the door.

Devens: “Come in”

Colonel Devens orderly enters, snaps to attention, salutes and says: ”Sir A message from General McClellan’s headquarters”.

Gen Stone: “Let me see it.....Umpf”....

The orderly gives the paper to General Stone, salutes, about faces and exits the room closing the door behind him.

Reading, General Stone says: “.... Ummgp.....General McClellan says there is a rumor that the Confederates have reoccupied Leesburg, Virginia. If this is true,.....Umpf... it could mean they are getting ready to advance. He wants us to check this out”.

Devens: “Sir, Leesburg is five miles or so south of our part of the river defensive line. How do you propose we should go about investigating the rumor?”

Stone: “Ummm.....Well, the Rebels are watching all the fords and river crossing points; but about half way between Edwards Ferry Ford and Conrads Ferry Ford farther west, there is an island in the middle of the river. I saw it on my last inspection trip. Harland, ... or Haverford....or..”

Devens; ”Harrison island, sir”

Stone: “ Hrump.... Oh yes, Harrison,... Well, I seem to remember that on the southern side of the river, just opposite this Harrison Island there is a narrow stony beach and then a cliff or bluff that rises straight up 1-200 feet.”

Devens: “Ball’s Bluff, sir. It was named for the farmer who used to live there.”

Stone: “Hrump.....Oh yes, Ball’sHmmm.....Charles, what is the name of this scotch?”

He raises the glass over his head inspecting the contents closely.

Devens: “It’s called Glenlivet, sir.”

Stone: “Hmmm.....Well, it is excellent,...excellent....hrump..only decent thing to ever come out of Scotland, scotch.....well, maybe golf.....anyway, I doubt the Rebels are watching that part of the river because with that bluff they don’t think anybody would be foolish enough to try to cross there; so, maybe this evening you could get a small patrol across the river unnoticed and check out Leesburg.”

Devens:” Yes sir. I know just the man.” He crosses to the door, opens it, and says, ”Orderly, Get me Captain Philbrick”

Stone : “Well,..... good luck, Devens...Hrump..... keep me informed, I’ll be in touch”

He starts for the door, stops, returns to the table, puts the bottle of scotch in his pocket and leaves. Devens returns to the table, picks up his glass, looks at the spot where the bottle was, shakes his head slowly and turns to leave as the curtain comes down.

End of Scene I

ACT I – SCENE II 11:30 P.M. Same day

The set is the same as Act I, except it is night and the window is dark. There are several lanterns sitting on the table and hanging on the wall. The lighting is dim and subdued. Colonel Devens is sitting behind the table and he is examining a pile of papers on the table in front of him. The orderly knocks and enters the room. Devens looks up, the orderly salutes and says: “Captain Philbrick to see you sir.”

Devens “Send him in”

Orderly: “Yes sir” He salutes again, about faces and as he leaves the room he almost collides with Captain Philbrick . Philbrick is a tall, powerful man with scratches on his face and hands. His uniform is ripped in several places and he has dirt and mud in spots all over it. Philbrick marches to the center of the room, comes to attention and salutes.

Devens: “Philbrick, you’re a mess! What happened to you? Why are you reporting to me looking as sloppy as that?”

Captain Philbrick: “Sir, I knew how anxious you were about the mission so I reported to you as soon as we got back without taking time to clean up.”

Devens: “Well,..... get on with it. What did you find out? Start at the beginning.”

Philbrick: “Yes sir, I took a twenty man patrol with me, but I could only find three small boats to take us across the river. Then when we got on the beach it took us more time to find a way around that cliff. Nobody can climb that cliff sir, it’s straight up and down. Finally, at the left side of the cliff we found a narrow winding twisty goat path. The men made it to the top, but it was a hard climb. I think it will be very difficult to bring guns up that path. At the top there is a large triangular open farm field, but it is not under cultivation this year. By the time we got started toward Leesburg it was beginning to get dark. After we had gone about a mile or two, it had become so dark we could hardly see. That’s when we came upon a row of thirty-five or forty tents. There didn’t seem to be anybody around, but we were sure the Johnny Rebs wouldn’t just abandon that many tents. They must be around someplace. So we started back to report to you and we got lost in the pitch black woods and blackberry thickets for awhile.”

Colonel Devens thinking: “Hmm..... General Stone thought the Confederates might put troops or obstacles in front of Leesburg to prevent us from discovering their plans; so he had the foresight to order a ‘reconnaissance in force’ tomorrow..... I am taking 300 men with me..... that should be enough to take care of your tent rebels,..... and I want you to go with me as guide. With only three small boats we will have to leave Harrison’s Island at midnight if we want to be on top of Ball’s Bluff ready to start towards Leesburg by first light tomorrow. General Stone will also start demonstrations in front of both Edwards and Conrads Ferry at dawn to keep the Rebs occupied and off our backs; and he has ordered Colonel Baker to bring his regiment, and any other units he can find, to the top of the bluff tomorrow as defensive reinforcements in case the Confederates decide to attack. That open farm field sounds like it might be perfect for a defensive fortification line to keep the rebels occupied until we can get away at night.”

Devens picks up a paper, looks at it, signs it,..... then glances back up at Philbrick. “You only have an hour or so to get ready, so hop to it”, he says sharply. “.....Oh, and don’t forget I want a written report as soon as possible!”

Philbrick snaps to attention and salutes: “Yes sir”

Curtain comes down: end of Act I

Civil War Genealogy Conference

**Our own Brent Morgan and Mike Strauss of Virginia Beach, Va. will be presenting
a special Civil War Records Workshop on April 12, 2012**

Intercontinental Hotel 9801 Carnegie Ave. Cleveland, Ohio.

The Cost is \$15.00 per person Call: 216 707 4100 for more information

Malvern Hill Battlefield to Expand

On February 1, I attended a “Town Meeting” on the topic of TOURISM, at Willis UMC Church near the entrance to Malvern Hill Battlefield. The NEOCWRT members who attended our Seven Days campaign field trip (2008) will remember that this battle was on the last day of this campaign. The big announcement at this meeting was that Malvern Hill Battlefield unit was the recipient of a \$4 million Land & Water Conservation Fund grant that would be used to acquire 400 adjacent acres to add to the battlefield. The theme of the town meeting was a discussion on boosting tourism and travel to Virginia and its Parks. The meeting was conducted by the United States Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar and several others. Mr. Salazar spoke as did the Governor of Virginia, Robert McDonnell. Jonathan Jarvis, head of the National Park Service was also on hand for a short presentation.

I registered to attend this meeting as 1st vice-president of the Richmond Civil War Roundtable and as past president of the North East Ohio Civil War Roundtable. I filled out an extensive comment card at the conclusion of the meeting.

Our guide in 2008 was **Michael Gorman** who many of you will remember as he also made a trip to Willoughby to address the NEOCWRT. On this past Tuesday, February 14, our scheduled speaker in Richmond had an emergency and I was able to obtain Mike to speak at Richmond. He did a neat presentation on the Civil War in 3-D and yes we all had to wear the special glasses for the full impact of his presentation. Mike and Tina had dinner with Sharon and me before the Roundtable meeting. Mike said to be sure to pass on his greetings to his friends at NEOCWRT!

Your Richmond Correspondent,

Brent Morgan

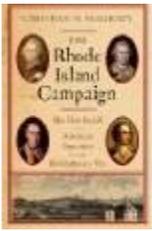
NEOCWRT 2012 Programs

 Jan. 10th **Bill Koeckert, Member** Subject: “The trial and execution of Hideki Tojo” Note: **Bill K. played a unique and historic role.**

1. Feb. 14th **Phil Price, “The Town that started the C.W.—Oberlin, OH”**
2. Mar. 13th **Henry C. Rueger, Retired Teacher, highly recommended by Frank Moore “Our Early Cleveland History”**
3. April 10th **John C. Fazio, “ The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln”**
4. May 15th **Ed Bearss , Subject TBD (Discussion) Note: Third Tuesday in May. Costs to be shared with Youngstown and Cleveland Round Tables**
5. Sept. 11th **“War in Winchester” Jerry W Holsworth, Author
Note: Shared expenses with Youngstown Roundtable**
6. Oct. 9th **Dr. Robert Stabile, “Bleeding Kansas”**
7. Nov. 13th **Brian Kowell, “Big Bethel, The 1st Civil War Battle”**
8. Dec. **Wives night and Xmas Party, Kathy Purmal, Executive Director, LCHS Subject: “The Mansions of Lake County”**

JET Founder and Program Chair

***The Rhode Island Campaign* by Christian M. McBurney** – a book review by Tom Horvath



The Rhode Island Campaign was the first operation in the American Revolution that was a joint effort between the American Army and the French Navy. It took place in 1778, three years before Yorktown, but was neither as important nor as successful as Yorktown.

The story begins two years earlier, in late 1776, when the British occupied Newport, Rhode Island, the third-most important port in the colonies. The following year, American forces gathered with the intent of recovering Newport, but before enough troops and transports came together, the British reinforced Newport, and the assault was called off.

In 1778, another expedition was mounted. A combination of Continental Army troops and militia, supported by French naval vessels, landed on the north end of Aquidneck Island. Meanwhile, the British, who had occupied the entire island, withdrew their troops to better defensive positions around Newport, near the southern end. The initial plan was for the French to land their troops and sailors and join the Americans in a frontal attack on the British lines. That plan was interrupted by the arrival of the British fleet. The French, temporarily, had superior naval forces on this side of the Atlantic, so Vice Admiral Comte d'Estaing, commander of the French fleet, pursued the British fleet into open water, hoping to win a decisive naval battle while the French still held an advantage. As the two naval fleets maneuvered into battle position, a very strong storm (probably a hurricane) arose, scattering and severely damaging both fleets. The devastated French fleet met briefly with the American troops on Aquidneck, then sailed to Boston for repairs.

Without French naval support and French troops, the Americans settled into a siege operation. It was short-lived. The British fleet was able to refit and return sooner than the French. In danger of being cut off on the island, American forces retreated north into good defensive positions. British troops pursued and engaged in the single major battle of the campaign. The forward lines of American troops retreated in the face of superior numbers until they reached their main lines of defense. Thinking they had the Americans on the run, British troops on the east front failed to put out skirmishers and fell into an ambush, suffering significant casualties. On the west, Hessian and British troops charged a well-entrenched American battery three times, but were repulsed each time. Ultimately, Hessian and British troops fled the field, leaving behind their dead and wounded. Among the defending troops were some of the first African-American troops to be tested in battle. That night, American troops withdrew from the island without further harassment, ending the campaign.

American forces drew a great deal of satisfaction from their performance. This was one of the earliest instances where American troops stood up to well-trained British and Hessian troops and held the field. The British also lost a number of ships when the French fleet first arrived, having burned or sunk those ships rather than have them fall into enemy hands.

This campaign had many elements of a good story. It included some sea battles, a huge storm, Hessians, an early use of black American troops, a near rupture in the new French-American alliance, and such notable figures as Lafayette and Paul Revere, but it lacks drama. The forces involved were not the main armies and, although Newport was an important port, it was not critical. Despite the confidence American troops gained from their performance, the main objective of the campaign was not accomplished and the hoped for co-operation between French and American forces was disrupted. In fact, the actions of the American commanding general, John Sullivan, nearly ruptured the fragile alliance. In the end, the campaign ended in a draw, and that pretty much describes the level of satisfaction this reader felt at the end of the story.

The writing is good. The action takes place in a confined area and the maps make it easy to follow troop movements. The author has the sense to delay evaluation of the commanding officers into a single chapter at the end of the narrative, allowing for a more fluid narrative. Still, with all of these factors going for it, Mr. McBurney does not tell a compelling story. He attempts to breathe some importance into the campaign, but never quite succeeds, probably because the campaign itself was neither critical, nor was it a success.

Published in 2011 by Westholme Publishing, the volume contains 427 pages, but only a little over half is narrative. The remainder is primarily notes. There are appendices with the order of battle of both the aborted and main expeditions, the order of battle of both British and French naval commands, and battle casualties. In addition, there is an index, bibliography, two helpful maps, and numerous graphics sprinkled throughout the text. Amazon has the hard cover available for \$19.77 while Barnes & Noble has it for \$22.76. Mentor Public Library owns one copy, as does the ClevNet System.