



# THE COURIER



## Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



**Tuesday February 2nd, 2011 Meeting #114**

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

**Canteen at 6:00 Dinner at 7:00 Guests are Welcome**

**Speaker: Norton London**

**Topic: "The Life and Times of Jefferson Davis"**

**Reservations required Please call Steve Abbey**

**Phone 440 255 8375 e-Mail: [abbeysr@yahoo.com](mailto:abbeysr@yahoo.com)**

**Norton London**, Founder and past president of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table will be presenting a talk on *"The Life and Times of Jefferson Davis"* on Tuesday evening, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at Dino's Restaurant in Willoughby Ohio.



Jefferson Davis

Mr. London developed his presentation on Jefferson Davis for the Institute of Learning in Retirement at Baldwin Wallace College in Beachwood, Ohio. He has presented a number of talks at the NEOCWRT on General U.S. Grant and various American Civil War topics. "Norty" London has deftly directed and arranged a number of the club's fall field trips to Richmond, the Shenandoah Valley and Petersburg, Virginia. When he is not directing American Civil War Studies at the Institute of Learning in Retirement or coordinating fall field trips, Mr. London is passionately engaged in tennis and consulting work for commercial real estate. Norton London is a 1957 graduate of Cleveland Heights High School. He attended Ohio State University where he met his lovely wife Joni. They have 3 daughters: Kathy, Nancy and Debbie. They also have a son Robert. Norton London is an accomplished speaker whose presentations are always interesting and well researched. Join us for this special program on Jeff Davis.

## 14<sup>th</sup> PRESIDENT'S CIVIL WAR JOURNAL by Franco M. Sperrazzo



**January 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Theodore J. Karle:** In football, when an offensive player appears trapped behind the line of scrimmage for a loss, then breaks through the line for positive yardage, we refer to the play as making something favorable out of a seemingly, troublesome situation. **Commodore Theodore J. Karle (aka: Oliver Wilcox Norton)** did just that. All 27 present knew of the passing of 6 NEOCWRT members over the previous 13 years. Ted did not want a program that would dwell on the two best known members for the sake of the others that had shorter tenure in the club. The alternative plan was to devote the bulk of his time to the history of Taps, going back over 150 years to the Civil War Era. Ted demonstrated how the patriotic music of the time period had evolved. A pleasant surprise was Mayfield High School

student and Bugler, **Mathew Sartain**. Matt improvised at least 6 variations of Taps at specific interludes. During the final 15-20 minutes, **Founders: Tirpak, Baucher and London** placed the commemorative streamers Ted Karle ordered for the memorial program on the American Flag. Ted then presented a combined biography and obituary of the 6 deceased members. It was a meaningful and admirable performance by arguably the best man to handle the rigorous task. The well published Theodore J. Karle, displayed due diligence that paid off. His work will be added to our website and forever be known as "A Night of Remembrance". Thanks to member **Paul Posatiere Jr.** for bringing his friend, **Teacher Scott**.

**Membership Dues 2011: 2<sup>nd</sup> reminder.** The cost is **\$55.00** for the calendar year. We prefer your payment before the next two meetings. Please keep your payments separate from monies for our monthly dinners. **J. Mike Sears**, will work the entrance for our February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Treasurer Bill Meissner**, will accept your check at the meeting or by mail at 9571 Headlands Road, Mentor, OH 44060.

**Edwin Cole Bearss watch:** Our honorary special friend will make an appearance on Friday February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Erie Maritime Museum. He is sponsored through the efforts of Edinboro College. Those interested in making the trip to Pa. should make inquiries to our own **Ted Karle** for more details. Museum address: 150 East Front Street, Erie, Pa. 16507 Phone (814) 452-2744. On line search [www.brigniagara.org](http://www.brigniagara.org).

**George Washington's 279 Birthday! Sons of the American Revolution, Citizens, Patriots, Historians:** We are mentioned in the program brochure. It would be great to fill a table of at least 8 or more? Questions, ask our own **Dick Fetzer**, (330) 562-5781. Email: [trecclimber123@yahoo.com](mailto:trecclimber123@yahoo.com). Here are facts; Saturday February 19, 2011; doors open 11:30 a.m.; Shaker Heights Country Club; 3300 Courtland Boulevard; Shaker Heights, OH 44122-2810; Cost \$31.00 including tax, gratuity and parking; Fellowship begins from 11:30-Noon; Lunch and program 12:00- 2:30 approx.; Keynote Speaker: Patrick Jolly, is the 5<sup>th</sup> great grandson of Patrick Henry. His topic will be "Patrick Henry recalls George Washington". Send your reservation and check to: **Mr. Ted Minier**, 7168 Herrick Park Drive, Hudson, Ohio 44236.

**Western Reserve & Lake County Historical Societies:** Next month we will present more details regarding events leading to the Civil War 150<sup>th</sup> Sesquicentennial. Remember to ask me for passes to WRHS & questions on events. Our friends **Janice Ziegler, Education Programs;** and **Dr. Edward J. Pershey, Museum Director** will provide more information. **JET Tirpak** and **Tom Horvath** are contacts for LCHS.



**Dr. Phillip Price:** Has been bestowed the honor of Superintendent of the year for Ohio by the Buckeye Association of School Administrators. Doctor Phillip is I'm proud to say in charge of Mayfield City Schools. At the BASA meeting January 5<sup>th</sup>, he was quoted as stating "I am humbled and it's a great honor to be thought of by my peers in such a manner". The NEOCWRT is privileged to have Phil Price as one of our distinguished members. He is a 31 year veteran administrator. Prior to his last 13 years in Mayfield, Dr. Phillip served in Dublin and Vandalia, Ohio. Also in an Illinois School District. The complete story is on the cover page of the January 27<sup>th</sup>, Sun Newspapers, go to [Cleveland.com/Sun](http://Cleveland.com/Sun). The News Herald also had an article. The previous Mayfield City Schools Super was 22 year veteran our **Dr. Robert Stabile**.

**Norton J. London:** Will be our speaker February 8<sup>th</sup>, he will reflect on the life of former U.S. Senator & Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The CLEVELAND CAVS will set the NBA loss record. Franco!

## **THE BATTLE OF “FORT FIZZLE”**

### **COMPILED BY CARL DODARO**

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The “Battle of Fort Fizzle” (also called the Holmes County Draft Riots and the Holmes County Rebellion) was an uprising during the American Civil War that took place in the village of Glenmont (then known as Napoleon) in Holmes County, Ohio, between Union troops and local draft resisters opposed to the Conscription Act of 1863.

As the Civil War dragged on and the number of volunteers declined in 1863, the United States government implemented the Conscription Act (also known as the Enrollment Act) of 1863. This act required states to draft men to serve in the U.S. military during the Civil War if that individual state did not meet the enlistment quotas through volunteers, set up by the Federal Government. The Conscription Act permitted men to pay a commutation fee of \$300.00 to hire a substitute to escape service if they were drafted. Many Northerners strenuously objected to the Conscription Act and draft riots occurred in both New York City and Boston, Massachusetts. But before the New York riots took place and made the history books, a rural part of Ohio had its own uprising against the United States government and the Conscription Act of 1863.

A group called “Copperheads”, northerners who favored an immediate peace settlement with the Confederacy, was very active in Holmes County, Ohio. They encouraged neighbors to resist the draft or desert once they were forced into the Union Army. On Friday, June 5, 1863, Elias W. Robinson, a Federal enrolling officer, was working in the southwest corner of Holmes County, at a place called French Ridge and was registering men for the draft. As Robinson talked with the men, one of the men in the group threw a rock at Robinson, and as Robinson withdrew on horseback, at least one pistol was fired in the air to encourage his flight. Soon after, a provost marshal, Captain James L. Drake and his small posse captured the four Copperheads accused of attacking Robinson. On their way to Wooster with their prisoners, the marshal and his men were stopped by 8 to 10 Copperheads, who demanded the four local men be released. Captain Drake and his government band were forced to surrender the four Copperheads.

The skirmish caused a sensation and hundreds of Copperheads gathered in nearby Napoleon (now called Glenmont) to protest and to try to stop any further enforcement of the Conscription Act. News of the protest reached army officers in Columbus, and the military ordered more than 400 soldiers to march towards Holmes County.

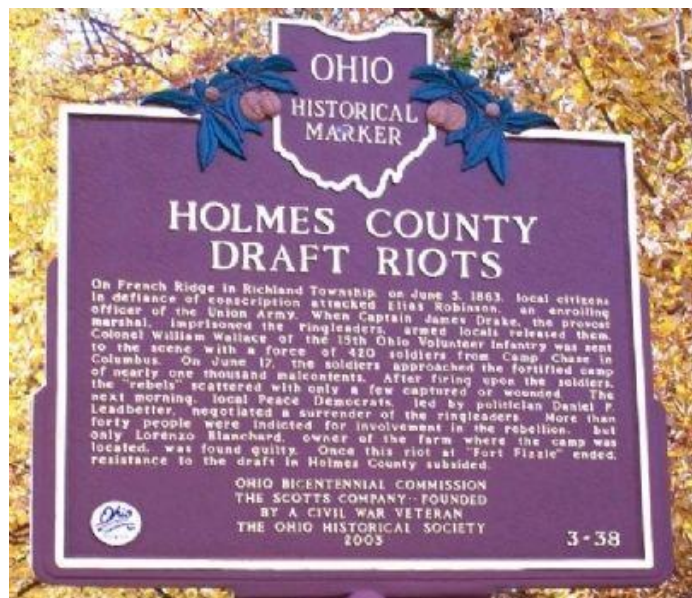
That report frightened off many of the Copperheads, but a group of up to 1,000 (estimates vary greatly) malcontents decided to make their stand against the Army forces at a local farmhouse. They named the house “Fort Vallandigham” after the Copperhead leader and Dayton Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham. In its cellar, the “fort” had a spring from which to draw water and a tunnel that led to an orchard. An old stone fence and large rocks surrounded it. The personal weapons of the Copperheads and four cannons (although it is likely there were no cannons, just a ruse to scare the Army) fortified it.

The Army troops, Colonel William Wallace of the 15<sup>TH</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry and 420 of his men arrived on June 17, 1863. The soldiers approached the fortified camp, aware of the 4 cannons and the estimated 1,000 Copperheads inside. The men inside “Fort Vallandigham” fired upon the soldiers. Some reports said it lasted one minute, others said no more than five minutes. In the end the resisters jumped out of the “fort’s” windows and ran out the doors and disappeared into the woods and scattered to the four winds, with only a few captured and two were wounded. The “Battle of Fort Fizzle”, as it became known, was over. The soldiers continued to hunt for the protesters for the rest of the day. The next morning, local Peace Democrats, led by politician Daniel P. Leadbetter, negotiated a surrender of the ringleaders.

Forty-three men from the Napoleon area were indicted for assaulting an officer and preventing the execution of law (U.S. Military Conscription Act of 1863). The armed men involved in the prisoner rescue were indicted for treason. An additional 37 men were indicted for their involvement in activities in other parts of Holmes County and in nearby Knox and Coshocton counties. Of these 80 men involved and / or indicted, only two went to trial, and just Lorenzo Blanchard (a.k.a. Laurant Blanchat), the owner of the farm that became “Fort Vallandigham”, was found guilty. Sentenced to six months at hard labor at the Ohio Penitentiary, Blanchard was pardoned by President Lincoln prior to completion of his sentence. All other cases were dropped and resistance to the draft in Holmes County subsided.

The state of Ohio has a marker (number 3 – 38) located on Holmes County Road 6, about six miles west of

Killbuck, near the address of 12943 County Road 6, Killbuck, Oh., 44637, on the right side of the road if you are traveling west.



INFORMATION ON THIS ARTICLE WAS COMPILED FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES

HMdb.org – The Historical Marker Database

Ohio Newspapers Foundation – Ohio the Inside Story – Ohio’s Fort Fizzle

Ohio History Central – Ohio Historical Society – History of Holmes County – Battle of Fort Fizzle

Wikipedia – Battle of Fort Fizzle

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

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## Winter Scenes and Thoughts to Ponder:



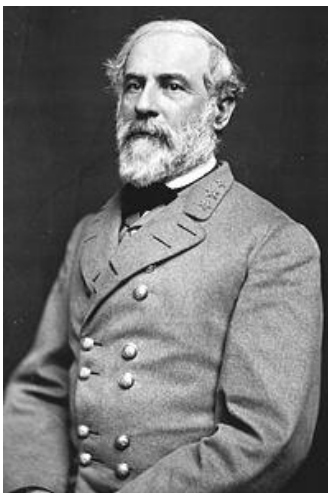
*Winter Scenes Photography by Bob Bartok*

Reporting on a study in the New England Journal of Medicine, doctors at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School have found that active physical exercise for at least **45 minutes per session 3 times a week** will increase the size of the human brain. Now I know where I went wrong!

**High School and middle school** American History books in the state of Virginia now expound that : “many” Black Slaves fought for the Southern Confederacy during the Civil War. According to the Washington Post, the author of the history books has developed a lucrative career writing American History books even though she does not have a degree in history. Write what the people want to believe!

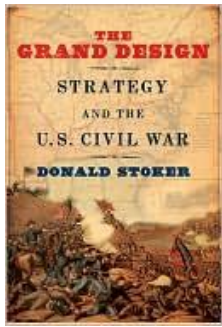


**It is illegal** to park your car on the railroad tracks in Prince William County, Virginia. It is illegal for more than Five Women to live in a house in the State of Ohio. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the limit is 16 women living in one house. As Mae West use to say, “I used to be Snow White.....but I drifted.



**The Alfalfa Club** gathers for its annual black tie dinner meeting in Washington, D.C. on the last Saturday in January. The club was founded in 1913 and its membership includes most of the movers and shakers in the U.S. government and the heads of many Fortune Five Hundred companies. The Alfalfa revelers gather to celebrate the birthday of **General Robert E. Lee**, that great American hero that led the Army of Northern Virginia against the lawful government of the United States. Was he not a traitor?

## ***The Grand Design* by Donald Stoker – a book review by Tom Horvath**



This is a book that should be read by every student of the Civil War. The author, Donald Stoker, is Professor of Strategy and Policy for the U.S. Naval War College's program at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Not surprisingly, his topic is strategy – both Northern and Southern during the Civil War. He contends that this is the first book written entirely about this aspect of the war, and he hopes that more will follow. I concur with that hope.

He begins by defining “strategy”, a term that is often misused. Strategy is the middle level of planning. At the top is policy – the political goal of the war. Next is grand strategy – the over-arching plan for achieving the political goal. Then we have strategy. Strategy should be set by the top military position, be that the highest ranking military officer or the Secretary of War. The next level of detail is operations, then tactics.

Because strategy should be dependent on the higher levels of planning, especially policy, Mr. Stoker discusses policy and grand strategy. He points out situations where lower levels of planning impacted the grand design. For instance, the Confederacy's initial grand strategy was to hold all of their territory, resisting any Union incursion. It took time for Jefferson Davis to realize and concede that the Confederate forces were simply too small to be spread over such a huge perimeter. Davis, who effectively acted as President, Secretary of War, and Chief of Staff, adjusted accordingly. On the other hand, he also allowed military concerns to change his mind about maintaining Kentucky's neutrality. The Confederate invasion into Kentucky pushed the Kentucky government firmly into the Union camp – a serious political and military mistake.

Mr. Stoker also examines which commanding generals actually developed strategies and how well those fit into the higher levels of planning. The personalities of commanding generals and their leaders played a major role in how well their planning meshed and was executed. In some instances, higher level planners would suggest, rather than order. Halleck was often guilty of this, but he had lots of company. A number of the commanding generals had difficulty taking orders and would seldom take suggestions; were often overly cautious – concentrating on exacting preparation while missing opportunities. They aimed toward a single major battle that would decide all – an unrealistic expectation.

Very little of the book is spent discussing the individual battles. The volume covers the entire four years of fighting in both major theaters, so extensive detail is not possible. There are less than two pages describing the three days of fighting at Gettysburg. Much more time is spent discussing and evaluating the objectives of Lee's 1863 incursion into Maryland and Pennsylvania and the fallout from his defeat.

Much of the content is Mr. Stoker's opinion. His credentials certainly give his opinion weight, but be prepared to have some generally accepted perceptions challenged. To him, Gettysburg did not represent the high tide of the Confederacy, but a strategic error made by Lee in what was an otherwise reasonable plan. He believes that Lincoln and Stanton could have ended the war a year earlier but overlooked the strategic value of Chattanooga, instead opting to “clean up” west of the Mississippi. And McClellan's Peninsula Campaign was a good strategy, but was hampered by outside forces, and ultimately failed because McClellan was unwilling to take the risks necessary to execute it.

Whether you agree with his conclusions or not, this book provides a different way of looking at the war and the battles. It is well written and easy to read. Mr. Stoker sometimes backtracks chronologically from one chapter to the next, but that quickly becomes apparent and is not a significant problem. The volume's 498 pages are interspersed with high level maps and include a section of notes and an index. Published in 2010 by Oxford University Press, the hardcover edition is available on Amazon for \$18.45 and the Kindle version for \$9.99. Barnes & Noble has the hardcover for \$20.12 and the Nook version for \$9.99. Mentor Public Library owns one copy and Clevnet has five.