

# Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

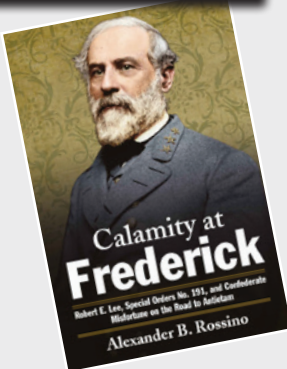
August 8, 2024

The Civil War: April 12, 1861 - August 20, 1866

## “Calamity at Frederick: Robert E. Lee, Special Orders No. 191, and Confederate Misfortune on the Road to Antietam”



Alex Rossino



In this new work, Dr. Alex Rossino makes extensive use of primary sources to explore these subjects and other important questions related to the orders, including why General Lee thought his army could operate north of the Potomac until winter; why Lee found it necessary to seize the Federal garrison at Harpers Ferry; what Lee hoped to accomplish after capturing Harpers Ferry; where Corporal Barton Mitchell of the 27th Indiana found the Lost Orders; and if D. H. Hill or someone else was to blame for losing the orders. The result is a well-documented reassessment that sheds new light while challenging long-held assumptions.

Bio: A resident of Boonsboro, Dr. Alex Rossino earned his PhD in History at Syracuse University. In addition to being a frequent public speaker about Civil War history, Dr. Rossino is also the author of several books and articles, including *Their Maryland: The Army of Northern Virginia from the Potomac Crossing to Sharpsburg in September 1862* and *The Tale Untwisted: General George B. McClellan, the Maryland Campaign, and the Discovery of Lee's Lost Orders*, which he co-wrote with Gene Thorp. His newest book, *Calamity at Frederick: Robert E. Lee, Special Orders No. 191, and Confederate Misfortune on the Road to Antietam*, came out with Savas Beatie in October 2023. Dr. Rossino does not limit his writing to history, either. He is also a novelist. His book, *Six Days in September: A Novel of Lee's Army in Maryland*, has been praised for its historical accuracy by Civil War enthusiasts, and his next novel, *The Guns of September: A Novel of McClellan's Army in Maryland*, is due out in 2024.

### Meeting Notice

Join us at 7:15 PM on Thursday, August 8, Free and open to the public. In-person meeting at Camden County College, William G. Rohrer Center, 1889 Marlton Pike East, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003, and simulcast on Zoom.

"Members, and Friends of the Roundtable who receive our email communications, will automatically receive the Zoom link and do not need to request it"

Please email [oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net) at least 24 hours prior to request Zoom access.

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### Notes from the President

**GREETINGS TO ALL!** I hope you are able to enjoy our New Jersey hot, humid summer weather. Going to the shore seems to be one of the ways to keep cool. Thank goodness for air conditioners. To the members who are getting over surgery or other health problems of any kind I hope your progress continues. Old Baldy is thinking about you. Picnic plans are coming along. We even have a chance to do a battlefield tour while at the Red Bank battlefield picnic area. Thanks to **Ed Komczyk** for making the arrangements. **Paul Prentiss** will talk more about the plans and will have a sign up sheet for picnic items and food choices to bring. We have new 50th anniversary glasses

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## OBCWRT Awards



The Society For Women  
and the Civil War  
for Service to the Society  
presented to OBCWRT

Civil War Roundtable Congress  
The Wallace L. Rueckel  
Innovation Award  
presented to OBCWRT (2022)

American Battlefield Trust  
for 25 Year Service to the Trust  
presented to OBCWRT

Civil War Roundtable Congress  
Sustainability Challenge  
presented to OBCWRT  
(2023)

Kevin M. Hale Award  
for best Historical  
Newsletter in New Jersey  
(2017, 2022)

By Kim Weaver,  
Member,  
OBCWRT



Bruce Sirak

thanks to **Dave Gilson**. They really look nice as we work on our 50th anniversary celebration. On a sad note the Civil War community is saddened by the loss of **Professor Peter Carmichael** who was professor at Gettysburg College. He passed away at the age of 58. We will miss his work, spirit, and love of Civil War history. Hope to see everyone either in person or on zoom at our August 8th meeting.

*Looking forward to seeing many members in person and on zoom at our meeting on the 8th. Hope you will stop by the Kettle and Grille to get to know our presenter and members before the meeting.*

**Kathy Clark acting president**

## Member Profile - Bruce Sirak

In the summer of 1988, Bruce Sirak was exploring the historic town of Harpers Ferry in West Virginia when he passed a man with a 28th Massachusetts logo printed on his shirt. Bruce got his attention and asked him questions about the reenactment unit. "He told me there was a regiment in Virginia." Happy the unit was somewhat close to his home in New Jersey, Bruce soon became a Civil War reenactor with the 28th Massachusetts Co. B, a regiment of the famed Irish Brigade.

Bruce was at Harpers Ferry that day because he loved history. When he was 10 years old his family visited Gettysburg, where he learned about the pivotal Civil War battle fought in and around the town July 1-3, 1863. Awe-inspiring is the best way for Bruce to describe his experience. At Hamilton High School West, he was fortunate to have a history teacher who hooked his attention upfront. He challenged Bruce, who was born in 1954 in Trenton, to understand the significance of history and how past societies operated and subsequently changed. He encouraged Bruce to excel. "I really liked history class, and I never studied for a test. I consumed it as the teacher taught it." In the early 1980s, Bruce went back to the classroom, this time to Mercer County Community College to take some courses in history. Within ten years, he would join with six other local history buffs to form a Round Table and name it after a camp that was named after a governor.

The Camp Olden Civil War Round Table was founded in 1992. It is named for New Jersey's first Civil War training camp, which opened in May 1861 and saw the first nine regiments of the state's troops. The Round Table, where Bruce served as president for 17 years, is headquartered in The Civil War and Native American Museum located in Hamilton Township's Veterans Park.

The training camp is named after merchant and politician Charles Smith Olden, New Jersey's governor in the early years of the Civil War. In 2010, Olden would be on Bruce's mind as he considered moving on from reenacting the character of a frontline soldier. "I was at a Camp Olden event where kids were learning about the Civil War, and I was talking to a woman about getting out of portraying a military-civilian. She suggested I portray a political civilian, so I picked Olden."

Over the years, Bruce has participated in numerous battle reenactments and school programs. At one time, living history was a family affair; his wife of 44 years, Mary Ann, and their two daughters took part in civilian interpretation. Every year, Bruce visits Gettysburg and likes to travel to other Civil War sites. He has become interested in all wars and enjoys reading about them as well as United States presidents.

Bruce served on the New Jersey Civil War 150th Anniversary Committee 2010-2015 through the New Jersey Civil War Heritage Association, where he is currently president. He is a District Deputy with the Knights of Columbus New Jersey State Council and is an ambassador for the Armed Forces Heritage Museum at the Captain James Lawrence House in Burlington. Thanks to Andy Waskie and Jane Peters Estes, both Civil War historians,

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Bruce joined Old Baldy CWRT almost seven years ago.

Bruce had a long career in printing and retired as a printing manager from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in 2009, 35 years after his first day on the job.

## ***In Memory of Professor Peter Carmichael***



Scholar, Mentor, and Friend Professor Peter Carmichael of the Civil War Institute and Professor of History passed from this life on Sunday July 21, due to complications from respiratory illness. He was 58. He was a historian and Civil War scholar who published numerous works including his most recent, "The War for the Common Soldier: How Men Thought, Fought and Survived in Civil War Armies."

The Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College issued a statement calling him a "true visionary, that he was a generous, charismatic and curious person." He earned his bachelor's degree in history at Indiana University-Purdue, University of Indianapolis and his doctorate from Penn State

University, in 1996 and held positions at Western Carolina University, the University of Greensboro, and West Virginia University before joining Gettysburg College in 2010. Professor Carmichael had an encyclopedic spellbinding storytelling and a commitment to helping young talent.

Remembered as a passionate and gifted educator, researcher, mentor and storyteller whose contributions to the literature and to public understanding of the Civil War will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.

### ***Today in Civil War History***

#### ***1861 Thursday, August 8***

##### ***The North***

In response to General Butler's persistent inquiries, Secretary of War Cameron states that the Union must adhere to fugitive slave laws, but only in states which possess such laws, and then only if they are not in insurrection. Further, escaped slaves must not be returned to states in insurrection.

#### ***1862 Friday, August 8***

##### ***The North***

Steps are taken to ensure that any- body seeking to evade conscription shall be breaking the law and so subject to arrest. Western Theater Skirmishing begins in the Cumberland Gap of Tennessee.

#### ***1863 Saturday, August 8***

##### ***Eastern Theater***

Still in poor health, Robert E. Lee offers his resignation as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. He takes full re-sponsibility for the defeat at Gettysburg and makes not the slightest attempt to blame any of his subordinates. President Davis refuses Lee's request, recognizing that the Confederacy's only hope of survival now lies with Lee's generalship.

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## 1864 Monday, August 8

### **Western Theater**

Fort Gaines finally surrenders to the Federal troops under General Granger.

### **Far West**

Federal columns range across Kansas and Dakota Territory on operations against hostile Indians.

## Old Baldy's May Meeting Review

# "CONTRASTS in COMMAND The Battle of Fair Oaks, May 31-June 1, 1862"

By Victor Vignola

By Kathy Clark,  
Vice President,  
OBCWRT



Victor Vignola

The Battle of Fair Oaks/Seven Pines occurred, May 31-June 1, 1862, two weeks after Williamsburg, VA as the troops continued to be engaged in the Peninsular Campaign. Today the Fair Oaks battlefield is hardly recognized as any kind of battlefield for it is heavily developed erasing many of the original land terrain of 1862. There is one exception the Adams House and Farm where the defense line was located for the Federal troops. There were about 2,000 men from four regiments of the Union IV Corps. They were able to cut off the main body of Confederate troops, protecting the right flank of the Union Army from Confederates that were four times their size. At this time the Union Army was trying to hold the line as they waited for reinforcements.

Another interesting aspect of this war was how Union troops were able to cross the flooded Chickahominy River on May 30th by the Union II Corps. The weather was raining for days overflowing the banks of the river. Mud was everywhere and the soldiers had to get through the mud by their own power with their supplies, cannons, and horses. Equipment and supplies were left behind as getting through the mud took all the men had to continue the battle. Finally the misunderstanding by Longstreet of Johnston's May 31st attack orders resulted in Longstreet's lost opportunity to destroy the two isolated Union Corps south of the Chickahominy River. Let's now begin the story and conclusion of the Fair Oaks Battle:

The Union Army of the Potomac, commanded by Major General George McClellan was not far from the outskirts of Richmond toward the northeast at the Chickahominy River. Placing the inexperienced IV Corps at the southern end of the river protecting the Union and their supply lines. Confederate General Joseph Johnston was aware that two Federal Corps were isolated south of the Chickahominy River. He had an attack plan to expose the IV Corps. Many bungled Confederate marches, assaults, and lack of leadership halted the Southern plan. Johnston and his troops succeeded in driving back the IV Corps, although poorly coordinated and resulted in heavy casualties. Finally the Union forces got their reinforcements. Major General John Sedgwick's division of the III Corps and Major General Edwin Sumner's II Corps brought in more troops to help the Union position.

From May 27-29, 1862 the bridges over the Chickahominy River had to be rebuilt. The 5th New Hampshire Infantry under Colonel Edward Cross were building a strong bridge with wood and nails. The Chickahominy River was an ugly river. McClellan instructs the men to cross the river on Grapevine Bridge and Lower Bridge. Severe thunderstorms on May 30th with 4 inches of rain happening in 4 hours flooded the river, destroying most of the Union bridges and turned the roads into mud. The men went through the mud near the rain swollen river bed trying to pull all their supplies and guns with them. Finally had to give up some of those supplies, their guns, and even animals as they tried to get through the mud.

At the start of this attack Brigadier General Daniel Hill attacks the right Union flank. Colonel Micah Jenkins rolls right through and pushes the Union troops back crossing the Nine Mile Road. Brigadier General Darius Couch falls back to Fair Oaks Station and Brigadier General John Abercrombie are also pushed back about one and a half miles northwest of the Nine Mile Road.

On June 1st, Confederate forces renewed their battle against the Union troops. Even with reinforcements they made little headway. There was a counterattack with Sumner's troops making the advance toward the Confederates and fires right into the troops. Some of the men were wounded but it was Johnston who was gravely wounded by an exploding shell from the Union troops. Johnston was removed from the field dying of his wounds. It was inconclusive who won this battle with each side claiming victory.

This was the first major battle and the longest battle in the Eastern Theater since Bull Run/Manassas the previous summer. It left more than 11,000 casualties and the Southern Army without its commander. The possession of Richmond hung in the balance. Seven Pines marked the closest the Union forces came to Richmond until near the end of the war. This little battle presented a warning to the soldiers and citizens alike that the war would be long and bloody. It would take three more years before the war would come to a conclusion.

Forces Engaged 73,000: Union 34,000 Confederates 39,000  
Casualties 13,736: Union 5,739 Confederates 7,997

Victor Vignola's treatment of this two-day battle with its wonderful maps and examination of this Civil War battle is impressive with all of his attention to detail, leadership, and tactics. This battle was a dramatic story for both sides. We are now learning about another battle of the Civil War that we hardly ever hear anything about. Thank You for writing this book for all to read and understand. We were so glad to have you as part of our Old Baldy meeting with your wonderful presentation. We also Thank the American Battlefield Trust who have saved more than twelve acres of this battlefield.

**Raffle Book Winners -  
Jim Countryman  
Tom Surria  
Dylan Scurria**

## ***"Those White Roses"***

### ***Mrs Anna Jegen Hitz***

In all the large cities along the border there were a number of ladies whose age or whose family cares did not allow them to leave home for sanitary enterprises, who, notwithstanding these circumstances, performed a large amount of very valuable hospital service. Washington city, especially, furnished many of these local visitors, and among them none, perhaps, was more active, or impelled by higher motives, than the wife of the resident Swiss consul, Mr. John Hitz.

The circumstance that Mrs. Hitz is a foreign lady makes her conduct the more praiseworthy. Many of the ladies were drawn towards the army by the strongest ties- They had sons, brothers, husbands, and old neighbors in the various regiments. In hospitals they often met those they had known all their lifetime, and when bathing a fevered head, or bandaging a shattered arm, the thought would often arise, "Perhaps some other woman is at this moment doing this very kindness to my brother." But the charity of Mrs. Hitz could have no such incentives. The union of the American states was a political question in which she could not be expected to feel a direct interest.

The number of Swiss enlisted in the Union ranks was small, but the fact that she spoke the languages of Central Europe, and could appreciate the feelings of the Germans, and address them in their mother tongue, made her presence in the Washington hospitals peculiarly grateful to that large class of recruits who could speak but little English.

*By Frank Moore  
Women of the War  
1867*







"My labors among the soldiers," says Mrs. Hitz, " began with the first arrival of volunteers in Washington. The weary, travel-worn men, thankful for a kind word, a cup of coffee, a piece of bread, were always made welcome by my husband and myself. It was some time before I saw the necessity of the Aid Societies, and other organizations, which we afterwards found so useful. "Among the arrivals of troops just before the first battle at Bull Run were the Twelfth and Twenty-fifth New York. They were quartered on Capitol Hill, near the Gasparis House. Wet and weary when they arrived, no preparation had been made to receive them, no refreshments were at hand, and the commissary arrangements were imperfect. Our house was near the camp, and my husband threw open our doors, and we went to work with a will.

"All the boilers we could find were filled with coffee, and we collected all the bread we could either buy or beg. Among these volunteers we found some little German drummer boys, one of them so homesick for his mother! 'O, madame,' he would exclaim, ' may I come and see you every day ? You are so like my mother ! "Poor boy !" In a day or two marching orders came, and they went out to that first, disastrous battle. When he came to bid me good-by, he said, "Please pray for me and my comrade; he has no mother." The tears fell as I asked God to bless them both. They were in the engagement the next day, one was killed and the other taken prisoner, but managed to make his escape.

"My husband, as Swiss consul, and a member of the German Aid Society, visited the hospitals almost daily, and becoming well known, whenever a patient was brought in whose language could not be understood, we were sent for. One poor man from New York City, whose mind was much affected by his sufferings, could not be induced to take any food except such as I cooked and carried him. In his delirium he imagined that I was indeed his mother, and that the nurse was trying to poison him.

"On his return to the North, as he passed through Baltimore, he recognized the place where the regiment to which he belonged had been attacked by the mob, and recovered his wandering senses. From his brother I afterwards received a letter of grateful acknowledgments for what I had been able to do for him in his suffering and helpless condition.

"One of the nurses at Armory Square Hospital sent me word that there was a patient there whose language no one of them could understand. On going down I found a poor German, suffering sadly from a wounded limb, unable to make his wants known, and apparently about to die. "As soon as I spoke to him, the effect of a few words of his mother tongue operated like magic. For some time I attended him daily, and all seemed well, till one day a sudden change came upon him. He sent a special message to me, and I took with me a priest to his bedside, as he was a Catholic. We saw him die in peace.

"After the great battle of Antietam, when even the Capitol was crowded with the wounded, Dr. Campbell came to me one morning, and wished me to visit one of his patients in the old House of Representatives. I found that a poor fellow from Pennsylvania refusing to take either food or medicine, but begging for some one to pray for him. I knelt by his cot, and when I arose he was calm, and willing to do anything I advised him. He recovered, and always insisted that it was that prayer that saved his life.

"At Mount Pleasant Hospital there was another patient who had not found any one who could understand a word he said, till they sent for me. "He was delirious, and believed the nurses, and even his own wife, who had now come to attend him, were trying to poison him, and he would not take a mouthful of food. After praying with him and dressing his wounds, he grew calm, and consented to do everything I wished of him.

"Several cases like this came under my care, and I found no difficulty in managing them. My only secret was, that I never lost patience with them, listened quietly to all their complaints, sympathized with their hardships, and gradually led them to do what was for the best."

Miss Hall, Mrs. Fowle, and all who were acting in the Washington hospitals, unite in their praises of Mrs. Hitz. Hundreds of sick and dying Germans made her their mother confessor, and she could be seen almost every day sitting by the cot of some sufferer, and reading blessed words of heaven consolation in



tones that recalled the fatherland and the home from which they were so far away.

She was beloved and honored by a great number of American soldiers, whose names she never knew, and whose faces she has forgotten. When travelling in the East, "she writes," I have been at many places unexpectedly recognized by fine-looking young men, who came forward with, "Mother Hitz, don't you remember me?" "My experience," she adds, "among the American soldiers has been altogether a most pleasant one. Certainly more patient, God-fearing men could not be found in any army; and it is but a just tribute to the young men of this country for me to say, that in all my visits among them in camps and hospitals, as long as the war continued, "I never heard a word improper for the ear of a lady."

**Born: 8 June 1838; Death: 23 April 1883;  
Buried: Lincoln Township Cemetery, Polk County, Iowa**

## "The Confederate Signal Corps"

*By J. Willard Brown  
The Signal Corps, USA  
1896*



**Captain, CSA  
William Norris**

### THE CONFEDERATE SIGNAL CORPS.

Early in 1861, Capt. William Norris, a member of Gen. Magruder's staff, a gentleman of scientific education and some nautical experience, called the attention of the General to the advantages to be derived from a system of signals connecting his outpost and headquarters with Norfolk. Gen. Magruder immediately authorized Capt. Norris to organize a corps for signal purposes, and appointed him Chief Signal Officer.

The signals used by Capt. Norris were similar to the marine signals then used by all maritime nations. Flags and balls of different colors were displayed on poles erected for the purpose. Various combinations of these indicated different words and phrases, such as were likely to be demanded by the movement and necessities of a military command.

Capt. Norris caused copper stencils to be made, with which representations of the various combinations were printed, and on the same page of the book which contained the illustrations were written the meanings of the combinations. These plates or illustrations were colored by Miss Belle Harrison of Brandon, and Miss Jennie Ritchie of Richmond. Capt. Norris gradually improved and developed his system. Meanwhile Capt. E. P. Alexander had introduced the system which he had learned under Major Myer, and had organized a provisional corps for the army of Northern Virginia, as recounted in a previous chapter.\* On the assignment of Capt. Alexander to engineer duty, Capt. Norris was designated the acting Chief Signal Officer for the Confederate Army.



**Brigadier General, CSA  
Edward Porter Alexander**

While the Confederates were occupying Munson's Hill preparations were made to open a line with Washington, so as to gain prompt information from their friends in that city. Capt. Pliny Bryan went to Washington and endeavored to secure a room in an elevated part of the city from which Munson's Hill could be seen. He was to take the bearing of the hill by a compass and "communicate to us by an agreed-upon advertisement in a daily paper which we received regularly. This would give us a bearing upon which to turn our powerful telescope loaned for the purpose by a Charleston gentleman. Then we would identify Bryan's window by finding a coffee-pot in it, and by motions of the coffee-pot, and opening and shutting the blinds, etc., he would send his messages, and we would reply, if necessary, by a large flag and firing guns."\* Before the line was ready for use Gen. Johnston withdrew his troops from the exposed position.

In response to a letter addressed to Col. J. H. Alexander, a brother of Gen. E. P. Alexander, I received the following reply:

AUGUSTA, Ga., June 6, 1888

J. WILLARD BROWN, Cambridge, Mass. Dear Sir: I regret that I can give you no information about survivors of the Confederate Signal Service. Except my brother, Gen. E. P. Alexander (his address is Prest. C. R. R., Savannah, Ga.), and Col. Norris, I do not know one. I was not aware until your letter came that such an association as the (Veteran Signal Corps Association) had been formed. The circumstance is gratifying. I would be glad, indeed, if time and conditions with me were such as to allow me to attend the reunion at Gettysburg. Many things conspire now to deny me that privilege. At the first inauguration of the Signal Service in the Confederacy, I, having received in the first place the primary instruction from my brother, Gen. E. P. A., then a colonel on Beauregard's staff near the Stone Bridge at Manassas, was assigned the duty of preparing a confidential circular of instruction for the initiation of officers and men, in this branch. I did prepare it, in Richmond, in early spring, 1862, and surrendered the copy to Hon. James A. Seddon, the then Secretary of War at Richmond. It was issued in form of a small pamphlet. I had attached also a table for compiling cipher dispatches - which was printed with the rest of the matter - and the whole was issued confidentially to the officers newly appointed for signal duty.

I was promoted to service in Adjutant-General's Department in the following winter, and assigned to the Bureau of Engineering most of the time, and had acquaintance with field service in signals only in summer of 1862, and fall, I believe - or perhaps to spring of 1868, on the North Carolina and South Carolina coasts, chiefly helping in the blockade runners. I did not therefore know many of the officers in the Virginia and Western armies. If there is a copy of that pamphlet of instruction in existence, available for me to have and keep as a relic, I would be glad indeed to have it.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. H. ALEXANDER.



Colonel, CSA  
J. H. Alexander

While the Confederate Signal Corps never became so distinct and independent a branch of the military service as our own Signal Corps, it received much earlier recognition from its own government. The Act organizing the Corps was approved April 19, 1862. The Secretary of War was authorized to establish it as a separate corps, or to attach it to the Adjutant and Inspector-General's Department, or to the Engineer Corps. He decided to attach it to the Adjutant and Inspector-General's Department, and issued the following order for its organization and government. Major William Norris, of Gen. Magruder's staff, was placed at the head of it. No uniform was prescribed for the Corps. The officers wore the uniform of the general staff of the same grade. The privates wore that of the arm of the service to which they belonged, and on the rolls of which they were home as on detached service.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
Special Orders No. 40.

Richmond, May 29, 1862.

The following Act of Congress, and regulations in reference thereto, are published for the information of the army,

### **An Act to Organize a Signal Corps.**

#### **Section I**

The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, That the President be and is hereby authorized, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to appoint ten officers in the Provisional Army, of a grade not exceeding that of a captain, and with the pay of corresponding grades of infantry, who shall perform the duties of signal officers of the army. And the President is hereby authorized to appoint ten sergeants of infantry in the Provisional Army, and to assign them to duty as signal sergeants. The Signal Corps above authorized may be organized as a separate corps, or may be attached to the Department of the Adjutant and Inspector-General, or to the Engineer Corps, as the Secretary of War shall direct. (Approved April 19, 1862.)



## **Section II**

The Signal Corps authorized by this act will be attached to the Adjutant and Inspector-General's Department; and officers of that department may be instructed in and assigned to signal duty.

## **Section III**

A signal officer will be attached to the staff of each general or major-general in command of a corps, and of each major-general in command of a division. These signal officers will each be assisted by as many signal sergeants, and instructed non-commissioned officers and privates, selected from the ranks for their intelligence and reliability, as circumstances may require, and as many lance sergeants as are required may be appointed. Such non-commissioned officers and privates may be detailed for this duty by the generals in whose command they are serving. Before being instructed, they will each be required by the signal officer to take an oath not to divulge, directly or indirectly, the system of signals, the alphabet, or any official message sent or received thereby, Non-commissioned officers, while on signal duty, and privates on this duty, will receive forty cents per day extra pay.

## **Section IV**

Commissioned officers of the Signal Corps, or officers serving on signal duty, will be entitled to the forage and allowance of officers of similar rank in the cavalry. Non-commissioned officers and privates on signal duty will be mounted by the quartermaster, on the order of the commanding general.

## **Section V**

Requisitions for flags, torches, glasses, and all the material required, will be made on the quartermaster's department, or they may be purchased by the quartermaster of any division, on the order of the major-general commanding.

## **Section VI**

On the order of the general commanding a corps, other officers or privates than those regularly on signal duty may be instructed in the system of signals, after having taken the oath prescribed above. "Whenever it is practicable, it is specially recommended to all general officers to have their assistant adjutant-generals and aides-de-camp instructed."

## **Section VII**

Whatever is prescribed herein for a division, or for a major-general, will be observed in the case of each brigade which constitutes a separate command.

## **Section VIII**

All officers and non-commissioned officers accepting appointments to the Signal Corps will forward with their acceptance the oath prescribed above, sworn to before a magistrate, notary public, or commissioned officer of the Corps.

## **Section IX**

Quarterly returns of signal property will be made by all officers having it in charge, to the quartermaster's department, and the senior signal officer of each separate army in the field will report quarterly to the adjutant and inspector-general the number and organization of the Signal Corps of the Army, and its general operations during the previous quarter.

## **Section X**

It will be the duty of the signal officer of every division in the field to instruct the adjutant of each regiment in the division in the system of signals in use in the army.

By command of the Secretary of War,  
S. COOPER,  
Adjutant and Inspector-General."

The Signal Corps, as thus organized, consisted of one major, ten captains, ten 1st lieutenants, ten 2d lieutenants, and twenty sergeants. There were no privates, as men were detailed from the line whenever wanted, and, when their services were no longer required, they returned to their respective commands. The detailed men in all the branches of the service numbered fifteen hundred, and it is affirmed by the officers of the Corps, that, though

these men were often employed in independent service, and were in possession of important secrets, not one of them ever deserted or betrayed his trust. All the detailed men were instructed in the cipher system, and intrusted with the key-word. They were also instructed in the use of the electric telegraph. When occasion required they entered our lines and visited northern cities, or even went to lands beyond the sea, communicating with agents and secret friends of the Confederacy, ordering supplies and conveying them to their destination, running the blockade by land and sea, making nightly voyages in bays and rivers, threading the cordon of Union pickets and gunboats, following blind trails through swamp and forest, and as much experts with oar and sail, on deck and in the saddle, with rifle and revolver, as with flag, torch, telegraph, and secret cipher.

In reply to certain interrogatories submitted to the Chief Signal Officer by the Adjutant-General's Department, Col. Norris replied as follows:

"Accredited agents are constantly in New York, Baltimore, and Washington. These agents are gentlemen of high social position, who, without compensation, have voluntarily devoted their time and energies to this work. Among them I mention in confidence the name of Hon. \_\_\_\_\_ There is no secret service fund. Beyond the mere pay, rations, and clothing of the officers and detailed men engaged in them, these lines have never cost the government one farthing since I assumed command." We receive information regularly from the United States on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. For prudential reasons no record of such communications is kept in this office, except in cipher. From the first of April to the last of September we placed files of Baltimore papers published one morning in the hands of President Davis next evening. New York papers were, of course, a day later." Col. Norris gives the history of the secret service branch of the Signal Corps in the following words:

"In the fall of 1862 the necessity of having points on the Potomac at which government agents and army scouts might promptly cross to and from the United States was so seriously appreciated that the Secretary of War suggested the propriety of establishing one or more camps in King George and Westmoreland counties, with an especial eye to such transportation. The idea was immediately acted upon. In a short time the additional duties were assigned to these stations:

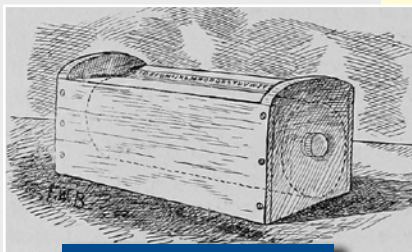
"1st. Of observing and reporting all movements of troops, etc., on the Potomac.  
2d. Securing complete files of northern papers for the executive department  
3rd. Upon requisition from the heads of bureaus, to obtain from the United States small packages, books, etc."

"Here our duties, strictly speaking, ended. But, as we were forced, in order to perform the other duties, to establish a line of agents from the Potomac to Washington, it was determined, as far as possible, to institute a regular system of espionage. The government having failed, however, to place at our disposal the necessary means to carry into execution this design, we have been forced to rely almost entirely upon the energy and zeal of a few devoted gentlemen of Maryland for such indications of the enemy's movements as they have been able to acquire from mingling in official circles about Washington, Baltimore, and New York."

It was the duty of Col. Norris to wait on Mr. Davis every morning with the cipher dispatches from the generals of armies and from department commanders. The burden of these dispatches was, towards the close, calamitous and importunate; reinforcements and supplies were everywhere demanded. All looked to Mr. Davis for relief and support.

Col. Norris bears testimony to the unruffled serenity of his chief. Through all these trying hours not an impatient or despondent word ever escaped him. If Mr. Davis ever knew when he was whipped he never let anyone else know that he knew it. The secret cipher used by the Confederate War Department was that known as the Court cipher, and has been much used in diplomatic service.

A key-word or phrase is agreed upon by the parties who intend to



**Confederate Cipher Machine**

The alphabet is written out in a square, thus: —

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A
C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B
D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C
E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D
F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E
G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F
H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W
Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y

### Confederate Cipher Code Sheet

communicate in cipher. The message is written under the key. Suppose, for example, the key to be "In God we trust." and the message to be sent,-

"Longstreet is marching on Fisher's Hill."

It will be written thus:

In godwetrustingodwetrustingodwett  
Longstreetismarchingonfishershill.

The first letter in the key is "I" and the letter under it is "L" Take "I" in the top horizontal line and run down the "I" vertical column until it intersects the "L" horizontal line. The letter at the intersection is "T". This is substituted in the message for "L" in Longstreet. The other letters are converted in the same way, and the message will read, "Tbtuvxvxnalunxqkerzfhxbaukfvdmec."

To decipher the message the key was written over it, and the process by which it was put into cipher was reversed. To facilitate reading the cipher messages, Capt. William N. Barker, of the Confederate Signal Corps, invented a simple but convenient apparatus. The alphabetical square was pasted on a cylinder and revolved under a bar on which was a sliding pointer. Under the pointer and along the bar was pasted the alphabet in a horizontal line. The pointer was brought to the letter in the key on the bar, and the letter in the word to be converted was rolled up under the bar and the pointer rested on the required substitute letter.

A model of this apparatus is preserved among the Confederate records in the War Department at Washington. One is also in the possession of the writer, presented to him by Capt. J. M. McClintock. The Confederate officers were



sometimes so careless or unskilful in forming their cipher dispatches that some important ones which fell into the hands of our officers were readily deciphered.

One from Gen. Beauregard just after the battle of Shiloh, giving the number and condition of his forces at Corinth, was formed by merely putting the last half of the alphabet first, that is, substituting M for A, N for B, O for C, etc. This dispatch fell into our hands and first reached Richmond in an northern newspaper. A message from Mr. Davis at Montgomery to Gen. E. Kirby Smith commanding the Trans-Mississippi Department, was partly in plain language and partly in cipher. The following is a part of the message: "By which you may effect o-tpggexyk - above that part hjopskwmet patrolled by the, etc." An expert of the U. S. Military Telegraph Corps guessed out the following translation: "By which you may effect a crossing above that part of the river patrolled by the, etc.". The guess was right, and by applying it the key-phrase was found to be "complete victory," and there was of course no trouble in reading what remained of the message in cipher. W. R. Plum, Esq., the author of the "History of the Military Telegraph in the Civil War," says this meaning occurred to him at first sight, and would have occurred to any-one familiar with military affairs in that section.

The alphabet or code first used by the Confederate Signal Corps was a modification of that introduced by Maj. Myer into the service of the United States. It became necessary to change it several times during the war, as from observation of messages sent, the Signal Corps of the Union Army learned the code employed, while the Confederates took the same liberty with the messages of our Corps.

We early secured an advantage, however, by the introduction of cipher disks which enabled us to change the code daily, or hourly, if circumstances demanded. On this account it never became necessary to change the basal code, which remained the same throughout the war. Early played a ruse on Sheridan in the Valley campaign. Finding that Maj. Howard, Sheridan's Signal Officer, was reading his signals, he caused the following dispatch to be sent to himself by his signal flags:

Lieut.-Gen. EARLY,  
Fisher's Hill. Be ready to advance on Sheridan as soon as my forces get up, and  
we can crush him before he finds out I have joined you.  
J. LONGSTREET

When this was communicated to Sheridan, as Early intended it to be, Sheridan telegraphed to Washington, and Halleck telegraphed to Grant. In time, the information came to Sheridan that Longstreet was nowhere near Early. The reports of Lieut. Frank Markoe, Signal Officer at Charleston, show that during the siege thousands of messages were sent from one post to another, and from outposts to headquarters, most of which could have been sent in no other way, and many were of great importance to the Confederate authorities. Lieut. Markoe says that he read nearly every message we sent. He was forewarned of our attack on the 18th of July, 1863. He adds regretfully, however, that through the carelessness of the staff officers at headquarters it leaked out that he was reading our messages. Our officers then began to use the cipher disk. In August he intercepted the following message: "Send me a copy of rebel code immediately, if you have one in your possession."

***"He therefore changed his code."***

**Continued in next issue**

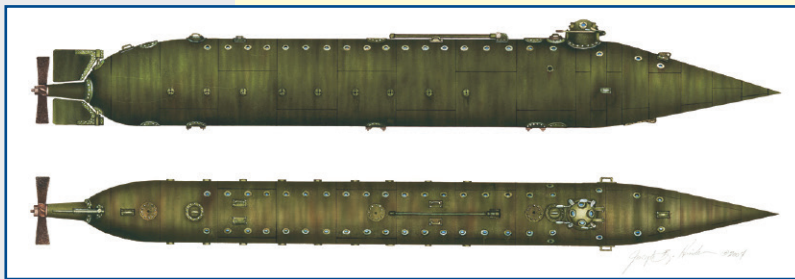


## Join the Hunt for the Alligator Junior

*The prototype Civil War submarine abandoned in Rancocas Creek.*

[www.navyandmarine.org](http://www.navyandmarine.org)

Inventor Brutus de Villeroi developed what became known as Alligator Jr. in 1859, initially as a salvage vessel, and offered her to the US Navy shortly after the start of the Civil War. The Navy was interested, but asked de Villeroi to build a larger version. That boat became the Alligator, the first submersible deployed to a combat zone with an enlisted crew. Lost in an 1863 storm off Cape Hatteras, Alligator was the focus of search efforts beginning in 2002. But after several years it became apparent that her location would remain elusive.

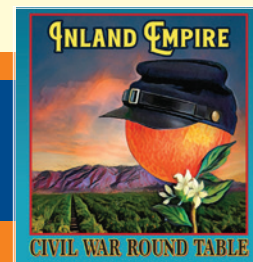


The Alligator's prototype, dubbed "Alligator Junior", is now the subject of an effort to pinpoint her location and hopefully, to begin recovery. Junior, it is believed, sits buried in the muddy bank of the Rancocas Creek in Riverside, NJ, close to the former site of de Villeroi's boatyard. Locals claim parts of her were visible into the early 1960s.

**The Original Alligator Submarine**

The next step toward identification and eventual recovery requires large-scale aerial magnetometer scans. This is the point we are at today; raising funds to pay for this work. To find this craft would be an incredible boon to the understanding of period technology and the earliest days of submarine warfare. If you would like to support this project, to find the first submarine in which the U.S. Navy took interest, please visit [www.navyandmarine.org](http://www.navyandmarine.org)

## Our Sister Round Table Inland Empire Upcoming events



**Monday, August 19, 6:15pm – 7:15pm, In-Person and Zoom at 6:15 p.m.**  
**Robert (Bert) M. Dunkerly; Historian, Teacher, Park Ranger, and a past President of the Richmond Civil War Round Table "Civil War Railroads"**  
**This program will be presented in the Contemporary Club.**  
**This is a Zoom Webinar; the link is below.**

**For Zoom links, and regional Round Table program times  
& locations, go to:  
[inlandempirecwr.org](http://inlandempirecwr.org) and [socalcwr.org](http://socalcwr.org).**





The Cruiser Olympia won fame in the Spanish-American War and served as a flagship in WWI



Independence Hall

# HOMECOMING 250

**OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2025**

To kickoff America's celebration of its 250 years of independence, Homecoming 250 Navy Marine Corps will honor the men and women who gained and continue to defend our independence. Through our efforts, the Secretary of the Navy has announced that the Navy and Marine Corps should celebrate their 250th birthdays in their birthplace, Philadelphia, PA, and Camden, NJ. Homecoming 250 will salute their 250 years of distinguished service by hosting spectacular events, ceremonies, parades, aerial demonstrations, exhibitions, and educational programs featuring historic buildings, ships, museums, and waterfront sites on both sides of the Delaware River.



## COMING HOME TO THE BIRTHPLACE

*No better place to celebrate the Navy and Marines' 250th!*

### THE NAVY & MARINES...

- Were created in Independence Hall and organized at Tun Tavern
- Commissioned their first ships and officers here
- Launched their first missions from the Delaware River
- Relaunched the Navy and Marines at Congress Hall
- Built the first Naval Shipyard and supplied innovative ships for over 200 years

### THE PERFECT BACKDROP FOR THEIR 250TH CELEBRATION

- Independence Hall
- Congress Hall
- The site of the original and recreated Tun Tavern
- The Navy Yard
- The Navy's Most Famous Cruiser and Most Decorated Battleship
- Philadelphia's Historic Museums
- Revolutionary Churches where the Founding Heroes of the Navy and Marines Rest



US Navy ROTC Midshipmen, 2021



"The President's Own" United States Marine Band



The Battleship New Jersey, the Navy's Most Decorated Battleship, fought in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Middle East



## JOIN US

Homecoming 250's Navy & Marine Corps 250th Celebration will be the grand opening event of the Semiquincentennial and will be its largest event honoring the military and veterans, attracting visitors from across the nation.

This event will remind us what unites us, reconnect Americans with those who serve, educate our youth, and commemorate those who bravely fought for us all.

To bring this monumental festival to life, we invite you to contribute through sponsoring and supporting this spectacular national event.

Your support will help...

- Shine an early spotlight on the birthplace of our Nation to launch the Semiquincentennial celebration.
- Ensure that this event becomes a memorable and meaningful tribute to the Navy, Marines, and veterans who have selflessly served our country.
- Provide a captivating journey through U.S. history with compelling visual displays, highlighting the pivotal role our military has played in defending our world.

To learn more, visit [www.Homecoming250.org](http://www.Homecoming250.org)



## Old Baldy Picnic September 21, 2024

### Save The Date

Mark Saturday September 21st with a bold red circle as we are going to celebrate Old Baldy's belated birthday.

We will gather at Red Bank Battlefield Park, Gloucester County's historic park located on the waterfront of the Delaware River. We will briefly discuss general picnic plans at the next meeting and set out a list of suggested food items to bring.

Again - please join us on Saturday September 21st to gather together, eat some delicious food, have great conversations, and celebrate Old Baldy's Birthday with family and friends.

Paul Prentiss ([pprentissfamily@gmail.com](mailto:pprentissfamily@gmail.com), 865-745-8336) will be coordinating the event so if you want to help please let him know.

## ATTENDING ACTIVE & HISTORICAL SHIPS

- Battleship *New Jersey*
- Cruiser *Olympia*
- Submarine *Becuna*
- Tall Ship *Providence Replica*
- USS *Monitor Replica*
- Washington's *Crossing Durham Boat*
- Wasp-Class Amphibious Assault Ship
- Arleigh Burke-Class Destroyer
- Freedom/Independence Littoral Combat Ship
- Spearhead-Class Expeditionary Fast Transport

## INVITED SHIPS

- Brig *Niagara*
- Ticonderoga-Class Cruiser
- San Antonio-Class Amphibious Transport Dock
- Virginia-Class Attack Submarine
- USCG Cutter

## ATTENDING & INVITED NAVY & MARINE AVIATION

- Blue Angels (Attending)
- F/A-18 Hornets/Super Hornet
- F-35B/C Lightning II
- AV-8B Harrier II
- C-130/KC-130 Super Hercules
- V-22/MV-22 Osprey
- P-3 Orion
- P-8 Poseidon
- E-2 Hawkeye
- T-45 Goshawk
- T-34 Mentor
- F4F/FM Wildcat
- F4U/FG Corsair
- F6F Hellcat
- F8F Bearcat
- TBF/TBM Avenger
- SBD Dauntless
- SB2C Helldiver
- PBY Catalina
- AH-1Z Viper
- CH-53 Super/King Stallion
- SH-60 Seahawk
- UH-1 Iroquois

General Meade Society at the Phillies game on August 27, 2024.

Phillies/ Houston Astros at 6:40 pm

First Level / Left Field Bleachers \$ 40.00

Make check out to Tom Kearney, 303 Forest Avenue, Amber, PA 19002

[Turkeytk@aol.com](mailto:Turkeytk@aol.com)

215-350-2754

## Contact Information of the Acting Leaders

Kathy Clark 856-866-0924 Klynn522@comcast.net  
Mike Bassett 856-334-5856 mikebassett609@gmail.com  
Amy Hummel amymhummel@gmail.com



### New Members

Tom Donnelly  
Philadelphia, PA  
Mark Klayman  
Marlton, NJ 08053  
Jeffrey Anderson  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054



*Jim Countryman getting his 5-year membership pin*

*FOB welcomes member Peter Moelker from Mullica, NJ*



## Upcoming Events that the Old Baldy CWRT is Participating In...

**Saturday, October 12 (Rain Date October 13):  
Mullica Hill Fall Festival**

**Late October: Glassboro Civil War Weekend**

**Tuesday, December 31:**

**Meade's Birthday at Laurel Hill**

**WEB Site:** <http://oldbaldycwrt.org>

**Email:** [oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net)

**Face Book:** Old Baldy Civil War Round Table

## Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2024

September 12, 2024 - Thursday

Tom Scurria

“Gabriel’s Graduation Trip - Virginia Battlefield Tour”

October 10, 2024 - Thursday

Allen Thompson

“In the Shadow of the Round Tops: Longstreet's Countermarch, Johnston's Reconnaissance, and the Enduring Battles for the Memory of July 2, 1863”

November 12, 2024 - Thursday

Chuck Veit

“Sea Miner: Major E. B. Hunt's Civil War Rocket Torpedo”

Questions to

Dave Gilson - 856-323-6484 - [dgilson404@gmail.com](mailto:dgilson404@gmail.com)

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia

Camden County College

William G. Rohrer Center

1889 Marlton Pike East

Cherry Hill, NJ

[oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net](mailto:oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net)

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