November 11, 2015 The One Hundred and Fiftieth Year of the Civil War

"A Country Worth Fighting For: The History of the 128th Pa"



Join us at 7:15 PM on Wednesday, November 11, at Camden County College in the Connector Building, Room 101. This month's topic is Paula Gidjunis "A Country Worth Fighting For: The History of the 128th Pa"

The 128th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry men came from the counties of Bucks, Berks and Lehigh. These volunteers enlisted in August 1862 for nine months in response to the fear of invasion of the North by the Confederate Army. Entering the battle of Antietam in Maryland after one month's service, they had very little military training and paid with heavy casualties. By the battle of Chancellorsville, Va. in May 1863 they were fully trained soldiers and possibly were the catalyst in the friendly fire shooting of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. As they became harden veterans, their enlistment expired.

Paula Gidjunis is a retired middle school Social Studies teacher and currently works as a bookkeeper for JPG Photography and teaches history at Manor College. She serves on the board of the Delaware Valley CWRT and chairs their Preservation Committee. She also serves on the board of the Historical Society of Montgomery County. She has a BA in History/Education, a certificate in Historical Preservation, an M.B.A. and recently earned her M. A. in History from LaSalle University.

Join us at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11th, at Camden County College, Blackwood Campus, Connector Building, Room 101.

Notes from the President...

As the weather cools and we get closer to General Meade's 200th birthday, our Round Table continues to prosper with new members, ideas and energy. It is your group; please share your excitement and enthusiasm with others directing them to our outstanding website. If you are unable to join us on the 11th, have a safe and relaxing Thanksgiving with your families. We are grateful to have you all on our team. Herb assures me we will have the Irish fluted glasses at the meeting, bring your \$7.

There was a great turnout for the screening of **Joe Wilson's** documentary, thank you to all who publicized it and those who came out to see it. Last month **Dr. Robert Hicks** explained Civil War Medicine by walking us through the treatment of two wounded soldiers. Even those familiar with the topic departed with new information. This month longtime friend of Old Baldy **Paula Gidjunis** will share the history of the 128th PA. Remember the November meeting is on Wednesday the 11th. We are expecting a good crowd as viewers of the prison film come to check us out. Be sure to make them welcomed.

We received a thank you letter from the Grand army of the Republic Civil War Museum & Library for the \$100 donation OBCWRT made to reframe several pictures recently located on the third floor. Thank you to everyone who stepped up to ensure our presence on the Saturday of the Mullica Hill event last month. Look forward to seeing several of the folks we met at an upcoming meeting. Old Baldy CWRT was represented at the General Meade 200th dinner as we extended our best wishes. Hope you had an opportunity to visit the Refreshment Saloon Dr. Hicks told us about at the Mutter Museum. Safe travels to those venturing to Remembrance Day events. We appreciate the members who wrote about their recent travels for the newsletter. Next month will be notes on visits to Andersonville and Union Mills and a new member profile. Also look for updates from the Book Award Committee and the Fall 2016 Symposium planning team.

Join us before the meeting at the Lamp Post at 5:30 for dinner with Paula and John.

Rich Jankowski, President

Today in Civil War History

Monday November 11, 1861 Brave Balloonist Breaks Barrier

In an manner of speaking the United States Air Force should be counted as having been created today, albeit in a joint military-private venture. Professor Thaddeus Lowe was possibly the best-known aerialist in America in these days, and tireless in his efforts to prove to Union officials that his aircraft could serve valuable military functions. Today, near Fort Monroe, the newly invented "balloon-boat" G. W. Parke Custis set to sea, towed by the Navy steamer Coeur de Lion. As Lowe wrote, he had "..on board competent assistant aeronauts, together with my new gas generating apparatus which, although used for the first time, worked admirably. Proceeded to make observations accompanied in my ascensions by Gen. Sickles and others. We had a fine view of the enemy's camp-fires...and saw the rebels constructing new batteries at Freestone Point."

Tuesday November 11, 1862 Confederate Coinage Carefullly Confiscated

Corporal Barber of the 15th Illinois Volunteer Infantry was a great letter-writer, and many of his wartime missives have been preserved. Today he wrote describing his unit's activities around Oxford, Mississippi: "We now kept shifting position and performing those uncertain movements so perplexing to a soldier... Restricted on our rations, all communications cut off...and surrounded by a relentless horde of rebel cavalry, our situation was anything but pleasant. The boys commenced an indiscriminate foraging with an avidity which knew no limits. In many places gold was found which the rebels had buried before leaving for the war to prevent its falling into the hands of the Yankees,

but a little coaxing would induce the head darkey on the plantation to divulge its hiding place."

Wednesday November 11, 1863 Benjamin "Beast" Butler Bounces Back

Gen. Benjamin Butler, USA, was one of the more colorful, not to say controversial, figures of the War. Not much of a combat commander, he had been shifted into administration, particularly of occupied cities. During his tenure in command of New Orleans, he had infuriated so many that his picture was pasted in the bottom of chamber pots. Finally he was replaced, not for irritating his subjects but for failing to sufficiently support the campaign up the Mississippi River. Today he got his new assignment, replacing Gen. John G. Foster in the Department of Virginia and North Carolina. He got off to a reasonably typical start, issuing an order forbidding the populace to harass citizens loyal to the Union with "opprobrious and threatening language." Women, for once, were not singled out.

Friday November 11, 1864 Salvador Sailors Squash Southern Spies

Panama, at this point a province of Columbia, was a common transshipment point for cargoes going from Atlantic to Pacific. One such vessel, the merchant steamer Salvador, departed for California with such a cargo today. As soon as she was clear of Columbian territorial waters, the USS Lancaster swooped in and boarded her. This was, interestingly, at the request of the Salvador's captain. He had warned the Navy before leaving that he had information that some of his passengers were not what they claimed, but he had no proof. Captain Henry K. Davenport had no such concerns: he boarded the ship and searched the passenger's baggage. In it he found a large stash of guns, ammunition, and a paper authorizing the bearer to seize a ship and convert it into a commerce raider. The passengers, led by Acting Ship's Master Thomas E. Hogg, Confederate States Navy, were taken off and arrested.

www.civilwarinteractive

A Medal of Honor for Ignatz

Ignatz Gresser was born on August 15, 1835 at Malach, Germany. He subsequently immigrated with his family to the United States as a young man about 1851. He was a shoemaker by trade. He was 26 years of age when the War Between the states was declared.

When the American Civil War broke out, he was a third corporal of the Allen Infantry, a militia unit under the command of Captain Thomas Yeagher that had been organized in 1859. Captain Thomas Yeagher mobilized the militia unit and the unit traveled to Harrisburg and was mustered in on April 18, 1865. This unit along with four other Pennsylvania militia units were the first to be transported to defend Washington, D.C. against attack by Confederate forces. These five companies and only these five became known as the "First Defenders". The average age of the men that made up the Allen Infantry was 26 years. The Allen Infantry was belatedly assigned to



Company G of the Twenty-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The Allen Infantry militia men had enrolled for ninety days.

Yeagher's Allen Infantry was the first to arrive

home in Allentown on July 24th, 1861. They were greeted with a parade, serenaded and dined by the local populace.

Ignatz Gresser resumed his occupation as shoemaker in Allentown, Pennsylvania. It was not until August 13, 1862, a little more than a year after his return from the original ninety-days service that he enrolled for nine months service

Continued on page 3

with Company D' of the One Hundred Twenty-eighth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He was given the rank of Corporal. All of the recruits in Company D and Company G were from Lehigh County.

The One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment arrived at Antietam at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 17th of September. Barely more than a month had passed since the regiment had been organized. At half past six in the morning, the regiment was ordered into the fight. They made a gallant charge through the wood and into the memorable corn-field, where the enemy lay concealed. The struggle was desperate and the regiment lost some of the bravest and best. The action in the cornfield was severe, thirty-four killed, eighty-five wounded, of whom six subsequently died of their wounds.

It was during this action at Antietam that Ignatz Gresser would distinguish himself. He subsequently reported that he had captured two Confederate infantrymen and was ordered to escort them back behind the lines and to turn them over to the cavalry. When Gresser exited the cornfield Corporal William Sowden, who had suffered a serious leg wound called out and asked Gresser if he could come and get him. Gresser replied that he would come back for him as soon as he placed the Rebels under guard. Gresser returned and found Sowden near the Rebel lines, bullets were flying all about. Sowden would likely have died on the field of battle had not Gresser helped him from the field. Gresser reports that he not only helped Sowden but another soldier as well.

On May 1, 1863 the regiment arrived at Chancellorsville and participated in the battle, suffering significant losses. The regiment was subsequently relieved from duty and was mustered out on May 19, 1863, having completed its term of service.

Ignatz Gresser must be considered the hero of Allentown and the greater Lehigh Valley area. But he was not immediately thought of in this manner. Ignatz Gresser was presented with the highest

> Ignatz Gresser's Grave Union and West End Cemetery Allentown

honor a military man can receive, the Medal of Honor, but the award did not come until 33 years after the event that earned it for him. It was December 12, 1895; Ignatz Gresser was 56 years of age, when the medal was awarded. Corporal William Sowden, although wounded at Antietam, recovered from his wounds and served his full term, being mustered out with the company on May 19, 1863. Sometime after the Civil War ended William Sowden became a United States Congressman and it was in his capacity as a Congressman that he was able to secure the coveted honor for his comrade. William Sowden died on March 3, 1907 and is buried in the Union and West End Cemetery.

Ignatz Gresser died on August 01, 1919 at the age of 83. He is buried in the Union and West End Cemetery in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Ignatz Gresser earned The Medal of Honor during the Battle of Antietam for heroism September 17, 1862 at Antietam, Maryland.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor

GRESSER, IGNATZ

Corporal, Company D, 128th Pennsylvania Infantry.
At Antietam, Md., 17 September 1862.
Citation: While exposed to the fire of the enemy, carried from the field a wounded comrade.

Lehigh Valley Heritage Museum



in Allentown

William Sowden's Grave Union and West End Cemetery Allentown

"On the Firing Line"

128th Pennsylvania at Antietam DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

Cornfield Avenue

A granite statue that may well be called **"on the firing line,"** if pose and action count for anything in cold stone and chiselled granite, marks with its rough quarry faced pedestal the One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Infantry's position.

The limit of expert granite cutting is shown in this statue, and only an expert carver in granite or marble can fully appreciate the relief work shown in this piece. The regulation sized muzzle-loading musket, cut practically free from the

body, the full length of the barrel without support of any kind, save where the two hands clasp the weapon, and at a point near the stock that barely touches the man's body, this statue ex-cites the wonder as well as the admiration of all who look upon it.

This model is also the work of Mr. E. L. A. Pausch, and the name of the expert granite cutter, Charles A. Pinardi, deserves to be recorded here. This granite pedestal is built of four stones, two bases, the die stone and cap stone. All



surfaces except washes are quarry faced and pitched to an edge, giving the whole a rustic effect that is especially interesting and pleasing.

The Twelfth Army Corps Badge is cut in bold relief on front pediment of the overhanging cap, and on each of the upper corners of the cap is a polished granite ball, which adds significant detail to the design.

On the front panel of the die stone is seen the Regimental bronze inscription tablet, as follows:

128TH
PENNSYLVANIA
VOLUNTEER
INFANTRY
1ST BRIGADE 1ST DIVISION
12TH CORPS
LOCATION 315 FEET NORTH
CASUALTIES AT ANTIETAM
KILLED 26
WOUNDED 86

MISSING 6 TOTAL 118 RECRUITED IN BERKS LEHIGH AND BUCKS COUNTIES

BATTLES PARTICIPATED IN ANTIETAM CHANCELLORSVILLE

This pedestal is 6'-6" square at the base and 9 feet high, making a total height of 16'-6".

Salvador Pirates

During the American Civil War the ships of the Pacific Mail, that carried the gold and silver of the western mines to the eastern states were under threat from the Confederate Navy in the form of commerce raiders, and several plots to seize one of their steamships for its precious cargo or to convert it into a raider to capture one of its other ships with such cargo. After one of these plots, that of the Salvador Pirates came to light, to prevent any further attempts to seize Pacific coast shipping, General McDowell ordered each passenger on board American merchant steamers to surrender all weapons when boading the ship and every passenger and his baggage was searched. All officers were armed for the protection of their ships. Detachments of Union soldiers sailed with Pacific Mail steamers.

In spring of 1864, the Confederate Navy ordered Captain Thomas Egenton Hogg and his command to take passage on board a coastal steamer in Panama City, seize her on the high seas, arm her and attack the Pacific Mail steamers and the whalers in the North Pacific. In Havana, the American consul, Thomas Savage, learned about this conspiracy, and notified Rear Admiral George F. Pearson at Panama City. The Admiral had the passengers boarding the steamers at Panama City watched and when Hogg's command was found aboard the Panama Railroad steamer Salvador, a force from the USS Lancaster arrested them and brought them to San Francisco.



The Salvador Pirates as they came to be called, were tried for piracy by a military commission, convicted, they were sentenced to be hanged, but General Irvin McDowell

commuted their sentences. To prevent any further attempts to seize Pacific coast shipping, General McDowell ordered each passenger on board American merchant steamers to surrender all weapons when boading the ship and every passenger and his baggage was searched. All officers were armed for the protection of their ships.

Thomas Egenton Hogg (1828–1898) was a master in the Confederate States Navy who participated in raids on Union ships during the American Civil War. He was captured and sentenced to death, but was eventually released from prison, after which he became a businessman and railroad promoter in the U.S. state of Oregon. He worked to build the Oregon Pacific Railroad, though his dream to create a transcontinental railroad with its western terminus on the Oregon Coast was never realized.

Hogg was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1828, the son of William Hogg, a prominent Baltimore merchant, and Jane Moffitt Hogg. By 1861, Hogg had moved to Louisiana. That year, the state seceded from the United States of America and joined the Confederacy, and Hogg was sympathetic to their cause.

Civil War

On November 16, 1863, Hogg and five other Confederate sympathizers from Ireland boarded the Joseph L. Gerrity, a Union schooner loaded with cotton, in Matamoros, Mexico. On November 26, they seized the ship without harming the crew and then abandoned them on the Yucatán Peninsula. The pirate crew proceeded to Belize in the British Honduras, where with forged documents that gave the ship the new name Eureka, they sold the ship's cargo. By this time, the ship's real crew had alerted British authorities; Hogg and one other man escaped into Nicaragua and across the

Isthmus of Panama, but British authorities captured three others in Liverpool, charging them with piracy.

Word of Hogg's success in capturing the ship and eluding capture reached Confederate Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory. In May 1864, Mallory instructed Hogg to seize a Union steamship, either the Salvador or the Guatemala, and use it for commerce raiding of Union shipping along the West Coast and the whaling fleet in the Pacific Ocean.

On November 10, 1864, Hogg's party boarded the Salvador in Panama City to carry out the plan, but Union officials had received word of the plot and a party from the USS Lancaster arrested Hogg and his men.

Hogg was sentenced by a military commission to be hanged for violating the rules of war, but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by Union General Irvin McDowell. Hogg began serving his sentence at Alcatraz in 1864 and was transferred to San Quentin in August 1865. On May 7, 1866, he was released from prison by another order issued by General McDowell.

Death

Hogg moved back to Baltimore with his wife Naomi, a native of England who was 35 years his junior, in the late 1880s. They purchased his parents' farm and built a large estate that he named Cecil Manor. The house, one of the most expensive homes in Maryland at the time, was destroyed by fire in 1890. On December 8, 1898, he died of apoplexy on a streetcar in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Due to his efforts to build a railroad over the Cascades at that location, Hogg Rock at the top of Santiam Pass is named for him, and Santiam Pass itself was previously named Hogg Pass.

Wikipedia Navsource.org/Archives

The Road to Chickamauga

In Search for Sergeant George S. Myers, 101st Ohio Infantry

By Frank Barletta, OBCWRT Member

I originally planned this trip two years ago, as a basic battlefield tour, to correspond to the I50th Anniversary of the conflict. Circumstances delayed the trip, but it provided the time to be better prepared. I know the basic story of Chickamauga, but with time to study the actions of September 18, 19 and 20, 1863, the more complex they became. To make sense out of what has been called the most confusing battle of the Civil War, I need to start at its beginning and with its participants, of which there were 58,000 Union soldiers in the Army of the Cumberland. So who was there? General William Starke Rosecrans "Old Rosy" was in command of the Army, which was divided into 3 Corps. The 2nd Corps was commanded by Major General Alexander McDowell McCook (a member of the "Fighting McCooks Family", his father and seven brothers, plus five first cousins, fought in the war). That Corps consisted of 3 Divisions, one being led by Major General Jefferson C. Davis (the other one, the murderer). Leading 3 Brigades, one lead by Brigadier General William Carlin, commanding 4 Regiments, one of which was, the 101st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Among its ranks was Sergeant George S. Myers.

Who is Sergeant George S. Myers? He was involved in the fighting at Viniard Field which was some of the most furious fighting that occurred on the 19th of September. It was from his actions that day "for the greatest personal devotion and bravery", he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

To correctly understand this battle, and the winning of Middle Tennessee, you need to begin far to the North outside Nashville over 9 months earlier.



The Slaughter Pen Stones River

From December 30, 1862 to January 2, 1863, the Battle of Stones River was fought, the first major engagement of the 101"

Ohio and Sergeant Myers. So it is here where my road trip begins.

Approximately 30 miles south of Nashville and 110 miles north of Chattanooga, in the town of Murfreesboro (thus the name of the battle in the South). After this hard-fought battle, General Braxton Bragg, Commander of the Army of Tennessee, withdraws South to defensive

positions around Tullahoma, Tennessee. This victory was vital for the Union since 1862 ended with the disastrous loss at Fredericksburg, Grant



Lincoln's Thanks for the Much Needed Victory

stuck in the swamps around Vicksburg and Lincoln's implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation.

After Bragg's retreat, Rosecrans spent the Winter constructing the massive "Fortress Rosecrans" to protect and supply his troop's push South in the Summer. Beginning on June 24, Rosecrans commenced his brilliant Tullahoma Campaign ending on July 6, which would ultimately lead to the withdrawal and surrender of Chattanooga on September 9 by Confederate forces.



Caperton's

Hoover's Gap viewed from the Confederate Cemetery

Train Depot Stevenson, Alabama

This takes me to my next location Hoover's Gap, Beech Grove, Tennessee. This is where the forces

of Colonel John T. Wilder's "Lightning Brigade" with their rapid firing Spencer rifles, forced Confederate units back, while remaining Union Forces on the left flank cause Bragg

to withdraw from Tullahoma to Chattanooga. Following the trail, I headed South via Tenn 56/AL-117 to Stevenson, Alabama, which would become Rosecrans' supply and transportation center in

portation center in the region. Continuing further South, crossing the Cumberland Moun-



Alabama Historical Wayside Marker



Caperton's Ferry

tains, I came upon a sign post at The Chestnut Grove Baptist Church, upon whose land McCook's men encamped before moving to

their crossing of the Tennessee River. I had found the Road

to Chickamauga.

Crossing over the Tennessee River at the original Caperton's



The Winston Place, Valley Head, Alabama

Ferry site, I proceeded to Valley Head, Alabama to Winston Place, the site of General Davis' headquarters and his division's campsite prior to crossing Sand Mountain en route to Chickamauga. This crossing occurred at Stevens Gap, into McLemore's Cove.



Steven's Gap

It is now September 18, then and now. In planning, I not only

wanted to experience the place, but at the same time of the year, particularly the weather, for it was heavily described in the diaries of soldiers. It was noted as warm during the days,

in the 80's, and very cool at night, between 45-55 degrees. The weather did not disappoint along with heavy morning fog in the mountains.

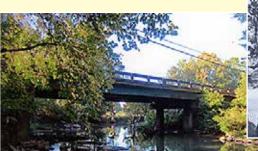


Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center

Unbeknownst to me, it was not only the 152nd Anni-



versary of the battle, but coincidentally, it was the 125th Anniversary of the legislation establishing the park system and the 120th anniversary of the park's opening, making it the first National Battlefield Park. Additionally, September 18, 19 and 20, 2015 fell on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday, just as it did in 1863. During the next 2 days, I was privileged to participate in four ranger-guided tours; a car caravan of the







Lee and Gordon's Mill

Local Farmer

entire battlefield, starting at Reed's Bridge (location of the first action and the site of recently saved land by the

Civil War Trust), a night tour of the crossing of Alexander's Bridge, Wilder and Lilly at Viniard Field (site of the 101st Ohio. action and monument) and another evening tour of Lucius Polk's Brigade's night attack. Three of these tours were lead by the eminent park historian, Jim Ogden. The next day I returned to the park one last time.

During my previous visit, I had seen the ongoing park program of leasing fields to local farms for growing hay as a way to manage the parks open



101st Ohio Monument

spaces. I saw cutting and thatching and even some of the 8 foot round bales. But today as I passed Kelly Field, smaller 2 x 4 foot bales were spread across the landscape. In the cold morning light, I was struck with the image of how much they looked like fallen soldiers of this long-ago struggle.

In order to complete my tour of the Chickamauga Battle, I backtracked to Lee and Gordon's Mill, which between

September 7th and 20th, had served as headquarters for both, Confederate and Union forces. at one time or another. It was here that Braxton Bragg thought the battle would be

fought instead of



Medal of Honor Heritage Trail Marker

the fields and woods of Chickamauga. As I was walking the site taking pictures, I came upon an historical marker entitled, "Medal of Honor Heritage Trail" and there he was!!! George S. Myers, Veteran of the 101st Ohio. The search, unexpectedly, has been complete.

To end my last day, I returned to Chattanooga and Lookout Mountain Battlefield Point Park. It was only fitting that



Ranger-Guided Tour



with Jim Ogden

Point Park Entrance



Overview from Lookout Mountain

I completed my trip at Lookout Mountain, the site of the famous "Battle above the Clouds" that opened the way to victory on Missionary Ridge, and the ultimate prize, the solidification of occupation of Chattanooga, as the Union's gateway to Atlanta.

George S. Myers

fighting with its brigade on what was then the right flank of the Union Army, which rested on the Vineyard Farm. An irresistible force of the enemy bore down upon this point, crushing the right of the 101st Ohio, killing and capturing many men of the right companies and compelling the entire line to fall back in some confusion. All of the color guards were killed, wounded or captured within a few minutes: the color

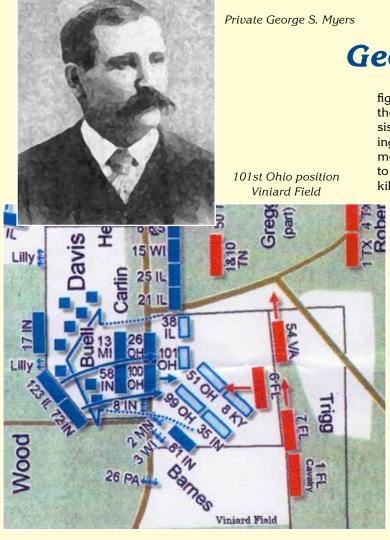
bearer went down with a bullet through his head, and the colors were thus almost in the hands of the enemy. I sprang back, secured the precious flag, and, instead of continuing the retreat, ran boldly forward and planted the colors on a knoll in the face of the Confederate line. The regiment responded to my initiative and the enemy was temporarily repulsed. I was wounded; however, and after turning over the colors to Colonel Messer, was taken from the field. To illustrate the fierceness of the battle on that part of the line, it may be added that after the engagement, all that was left of Company A of this regiment was Captain Bryant and three men. Company F, of which I was a member, had only two men left to answer to the roll call."

Private George S. Myers would always be remembered for saving the regimental colors by greatest personal devotion and bravery. The 101st Ohio Infantry Regiment followed Sherman on the Atlanta campaign, participating in all the battles. The Regiment then marched with Thomas to Nashville; afterwards, following Hood in his retreat. The Regiment was mustered out June 12, 1865.

George S. Myers later moved to California. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at Chickamauga on 9 April 1894. He died in 1917 and is buried in the Inglewood Park Cemetery in Inglewood, California.

Read more about the Battles for Chattanooga and George S. Myers in "Paths of Valor" by E. Raymond Evans.

National Medal of Honor Museum of Military History



George S. Myers was born January 26, 1843 at Fairfield, OH. He entered the service in August 1862 from Tiffin, OH as a Private, Company F, 101st Ohio Infantry.

On September 19, 1863, General Bragg initiated an attack to gain possession of the "Lafayette Road." Sergeant George S Myers relates "The 101st Ohio Regiment was

Aircraft Carriers of the Blue and Gray

"Look! What's that?"

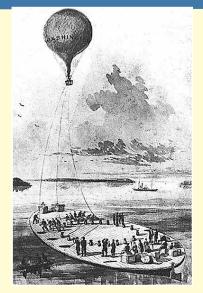
The gray-clad soldier pointed down the Potomac River toward a group of ships just rounding a bend.

"Look just beyond the last one."

"I've never seen anything like that before," his companion answered.

"We'd better tell the captain right away!"

On that August day in 1862, as the Confederate lookouts ran back to report, they knew they had sighted something unusual, but they little realized that the ships rounding the bend were the Civil War's most incredible armada-the first aircraft carrier task force!

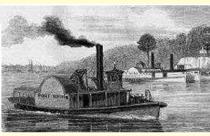


Escorted by the powerful screw sloop USS Wachusett, the double-ended gunboats USS Tioga and USS Port Royal, and the armed steamer Delaware, the heart of the force was an unusual craft being towed by a small steamer. It was this vessel that had startled the lookouts, for moored to its unusually large and flat deck was a huge balloon with the name Intrepid standing out clearly on its sides. The vessel was, in fact, America's first aircraft carrier, the USS George Washington Parke Custis.

Aircraft Carrier USS George Washington Custis

Carrier Task Force





Gunboat USS Port Roual

Union

The idea to use balloons was the brainchild of Salmon P. Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, and Joseph Henry, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. They suggested that the military should create the balloon corps under the command of Thaddeus Lowe to do some "aerial reconnaissance" for the Union.

On June 17, 1861, Lowe demonstrated his balloon in front of President Abraham Lincoln. He went up to the lofty height of 500 feet and flew the balloon the short distance between the Washington Mall to where the Na-



Model of the USS George Washington Custis

tional Air and Space Museum now stands. Lincoln had doubtless seen hot air balloons do such things at fairs for years; what made this journey special was that the balloon was hooked up to a cable that linked an air bound Lowe to the War Department.

In the first air-toground communication in America. Lowe

sent the following telegram to Lincoln from his balloon: "The city, with its girdle of encampments, presents a superb scene..."

Soon after, Lincoln wrote to General Winfield Scott about Lowe's abilities. However, when Lowe presented himself to the general, he found that Scott was less than impressed. Lincoln ultimately had to personally intervene to get the general to accept Lowe into the ranks.

In August 1861, the first army balloon was constructed and named The Union. The balloon depended on tapping into Washington D.C.'s natural gas lines, so it wasn't able to go very far. However, the next month Lowe was able to take his balloon up to 1000 feet and spy on the Confederate troops residing at Fall's Church, VA. With his direction, Union troops were able to accurately aim at enemy troops without actually seeing them. This was a military first, and the success resulted in the establishment of the Balloon Corps.

Professor Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, the army's "Chief Aeronaut," as he styled himself, had made extensive improvements in operation of the balloon corps. When first used during the Civil War, balloons were inflated from city gas



Sloop USS Wachusett

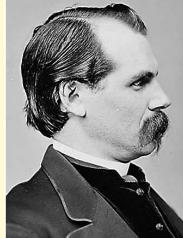
Gunboat USS Tioga

Armed Steamer USS Delaware

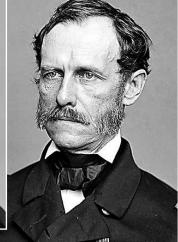
mains and then towed slowly and tortuously (while inflated) to the

scene of action. Movement was slow and difficult at best, and even a minor storm often made the operation disastrous. Lowe had increased balloon mobility by developing portable gas generating equipment that could be carried in the field. Even so, however, the movement of a wagon train with balloon, gas generating equipment, and supplies was

Professor Thaddeus Sobleski Constantine Lowe often too slow to meet battlefield requirements.



To improve balloon mobility, Lowe then proposed the use of a boat especially



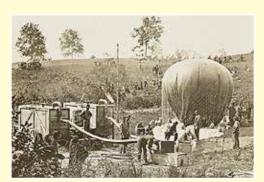
Rear admiral John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren

equipped to launch balloons and carry supplies for their operation, and the George Washington Parke Custis was selected. George Washington Parke Custis, a coal barge built in the mid-1850s, was purchased by the Union Navy in August 1861; fitted out with a gas-generating apparatus developed by Thaddeus Sobieski Constantine Lowe; and modified by Dahlgren at the Washington Navy Yard for her service as a balloon barge. Described by one correspondent as a "nondescript sort of craft," the Custis was modified for balloon work by covering the hull with a wide, flat, overhanging deck all around and adding a small house on the stern. Gas generators, repair parts, and other necessary facilities for balloon operation were provided and she was manned by a crew of army balloon handlers, under Lowe's direction. The

operation of the balloon boat, as it was called, was entirely an army affair, except that the lack of motive power and armament required cooperation of the Navy for towing and escort services.

The USS Coeur de Lion, an 110-ton (burden) side-wheel gunboat, was built in 1853 at Coxsakie, New York, as a civilian steamer. Later becoming a U.S. Light House Tender, she was

loaned to the Navy soon after the outbreak of the Civil War and began her commissioned Navy service in early October 1861. 'Coeur de Lion' was active thereafter on the rivers tributary to Chesapeake Bay. In November 1861



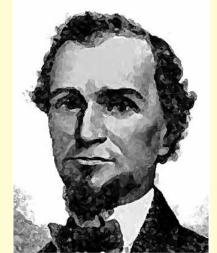
Hydrogen generators filling the Intrepid

she was tasked to tow the barge 'George Washington Parke Custis during Thaddeus Lowe's observation balloon operations over the Potomac River. During 1862-1864 'Coeur de Lion' captured or destroyed several would-be blockade running schooners and participated in a number of engagements with Confederate forces. Returned to the Lighthouse Board in June 1865, she was sold in 1867. As the commercial steamer 'Alice' she lasted until about 1873, when she was removed from shipping registers.

By early November 1861, the strange craft was ready for service, and the first balloon expedition by carrier left the Washington Navy Yard on 10 November. The following day, the first operational ascensions from the balloon boat were made off Mattawoman Creek where Lowe, accompanied by General Daniel E. Sickles, observed Confederates at work

constructing batteries at Freestone Point. The results apparently convinced Lowe of the value of his new aircraft carrier, for a few days later he wrote the Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard that "It is my intention to use permanently the boat lately fitted up for balloon purposes."

The Custis, however, was not the first waterborne platform used for balloon operations during the Civil War. As early as August 1861, the little armed steamer Fanny had served as a temporary



John La Mountain

balloon base in Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads. As reported in the Scientific American.

This operation and John La Mountain's earlier ascension from USS Fanny began the widespread use of balloons for



USS Coeur de Lion

reconnaissance work during the Civil War and foreshadowed the Navy's future use of the air to extend its effective use of sea power.

The veteran and daring balloonist J. La Mountain has been at Fortress Monroe making ascensions and examinations of the secessionists' positions in that vicinity. On the 3rd instant he tried a new scheme in aerial scouting, by taking his balloon on board of the steamboat

USS Fanny, and went out in the middle of the river ascended 2,000 feet, with the balloon secured by a rope to a windlass. The USS Fanny then proceeded slowly down toward Sewell's Point, drawing the balloon while in the air, halting, when opposite, for a time, and then proceeding on toward Craney Island and Pig Point.

After a long reconnaissance of the points thus brought under his supervision, Mr. La Mountain came down to the boat, attached his balloon to its stern, and came back to the Fortress. He reports that behind the trees on Sewell's Point he saw the labors on the fortifications actively progressing, and that a large number of guns, on cutting away the trees, will be made to bear on the Rip Raps, on the Fortress and on the shipping. The Rebels ran when they saw him in the air, leaving their works and peeping at him from their shelter and behind trees.

Part of his report:

"Height, 1,400 feet. In the rear of the battery on Sewall' s Point, obscured from the water side by the trees, is a clear tract upon which I counted 52 tents, besides six bush tents in the rear. I could distinctly see Tanner's Creek, but could not observe any appearance of work progressing in that vicinity. For 20 miles I could not discover any movements thereon. I could not discover any encampments beyond Newport News or in the direction of Yorktown, except about half way from the Bethel church and Yorktown I could see a small cluster of tents."

The operation had considerable value from a military standpoint, for the area La Mountain had viewed was screened by a natural growth of trees along the water. Without his aerial observation, the fortifications would never have been detected until after they had been completed and the trees cut away to clear the field of fire.

After that it would appear that La Mountain himself, if no one else, would have been a strong supporter of further waterborne aerial operations. His next one, however, did not occur until 10 August. Records conflict in reporting the use of two different vessels for this ascension-the USS Fanny and the tug Adriatic. In any event, La Mountain reported using the number of fires and tent lights to aid him in estimating the number of Rebel troops in their encampment. His report was apparently considered valuable, for General Benjamin F. Butler (who accompanied La Mountain aboard ship) promptly forwarded it on to General Winfield Scott. Strangely, however, despite the apparent success of these ascensions, the record shows nothing of waterborne aerial operations by La Mountain.

Although his reports were considered valuable, internal bickering amongst Union Army generals and pressure from his rival (the recently appointed Chief Aeronaut) soon led to La Mountain's removal from further service.

In the meantime, the Potomac River area had become the scene of extensive military activity. Both Union and Confederate troops were concentrated in the vicinity, and Union ships on the river often ran a gauntlet of rebel fire. The extent of the battlefront made reconnaissance a serious problem, and balloons were soon in use throughout the area. A number of balloon observation stations were established, but the rapidly changing battlefront made rapid movement of balloons essential throughout the entire area.

By January 1862, Lowe's balloon corps had expanded its operations westward, with the dispatching of John Steiner and one balloon to Cairo, Illinois. Preparations were underway there for an attack on the Confederate stronghold at Island No. 10 in the Mississippi River, and both Lowe and

Steiner believed that balloon reconnaissance would be of value to that theater.

On arriving at Cairo, however, Steiner was brushed off by the army. "Arrived here on Wednesday and reported to General Allen's," he reported to Lowe, "but he gave me little satisfaction.... I cannot get any assistance here, they say they know nothing about my balloon business.... They even laugh." As a result, Steiner offered his services to the naval commander, Andrew H. Foote, who gladly accepted them.

Steiner had observed the advantages of waterborne balloon operations in the Potomac area, and the similarity of the situation at Island No. 10 was immediately apparent. Obtaining the use of a large flatboat, from which a balloon could be operated in a fashion similar to that employed with the Custis on the Potomac, he loaded his equipment



Thaddeus Lowe with his maps and telescope

aboard and anchored at a point upriver from the Union fleet.

Then on 25 March, John Steiner made the first waterborne balloon ascension in the western theater of operations. Although the weather was hazy, the log of the mortar division, for whom he was spotting, indicated that "the experiment proved satisfactory."

The following day he again ascended from the flatboat, and the

observations were reported to have been of considerable assistance in correcting the fire of the mortar boats. With the surrender of Island No. 10 shortly afterwards, however, the waterborne balloon experiment on western waters came to an end.

Meanwhile, back in the Virginia peninsular campaign, the use of the balloon boat, the former George Washington Parke Custis continued. Lowe was determined to prove the worth of his balloons, and he often advanced to the very forefront of the army. In one instance, for example, he reported that "We moved by water to White House Landing, the balloon boat being the first to land, and was even some distance ahead of the gunboats, while the first night the balloon guard was the advance picket on the river bottom."

This article is made up from several articles from Wikipedia, Foundation 209, Naval Institute, www.nnapprentice.com

Continued in the December Issue

October 8th Meeting

"'Straight and swift to my wounded I go': The Reality of Civil War Medicine"



Another great subject and speaker. **Robert Hicks, PhD** informed us that massive casualties made huge demands on the medical practice, stimulating the reorganization of professional medicine. He discussed how the federal medical establishment re-invented itself and created the modern hospital-centered mode of emergency care that remains the Civil War's legacy to medicine. He focused on specific wounded soldiers to understand

Consumer of Domains

Consumer

Robert J. Hicks, PhD

on specific wounded soldiers to understand the picture of the medical war, his presentation followed their experiences from the battlefield to their medical care. As we know the Union Army was the strongest and best army in the World when the war ended. As such the medical profession also became the most advanced in the World. If you get a chance go to the permanent exhibition of "the real war" at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Robert D. Hicks, PhD is the director of the Mütter Museum and Historical Medical Library of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

November 11th meeting... Get ready for an interesting and informative presentation by Paula Gidjunis on "A Country Worth Fighting For: The History of the 128th Pa"

The Center for Civic Leadership and Responsibility Fall 2015 Special Events & Mini-Courses

For a Complete Brochure on all Fall events and Mini Courses contact: (856) 227-7200, ext. 4333 · www.camdencc.edu/civiccenter

From World War I to Iraq: War and America's Rise (and Decline?) as a Global Super Power

November 11

Michael Adas, Abraham E. Voorhees Professor of History, Rutgers University New Brunswick, will discuss how the two world wars, of the first half of the twentieth century, saw the rise of the United States as the greatest global power in human history. The Great War, gravely weakened its predecessor global hegemon, Great Britain, and devastated its most likely competitor,

Germany. The second worldwide conflict left the cities and economies of both its allies and enemies, especially Germany and Japan, in ruins and only Russia as a formidable military adversary. But the economic recovery of prewar rivals and a succession of misguided military interventions have in the decades since 1945 steadily eroded US dominance—despite the collapse of the Soviet Union—and discredited American pretensions that theirs is a historical trajectory that can serve as a model for all humankind and, if necessary, be forcibly imposed upon other nations.

15-WEEK EVENING COURSE

Wars that Changed the History of the United States 1865-Present

COURSE NUMBER: HIS-127-52 INSTRUCTOR: J. Pesda LOCATION: Madison Hall, room 210 TIME: 6-8:30 p.m. DATES: Wednesdays, 9/2 - 12/16

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and the 70th anniversary of World War II's conclusion. Both conflicts profoundly changed America often in unintended ways that still resonate today. Lectures, films and documentaries will be used to exam the impact of these conflicts on the emergence

of the United States as a world power both economically and politically. It will focus on the struggle of African Americans and other racial minorities, women, immigrants and labor to attain their rightful places in society along with the emergence of the Greatest Generation. The series will conclude with an analysis of America's future prospects.

Note: Registration for this 15-week course includes your registration for the lectures. On the night of a lecture the class will meet at 7 p.m. in Civic Hall in the Connector Building.

Camden County College
November CCLR Programs
Here is a reminder of the upcoming November programs
for the Center of Civic Leadership and Responsibility.

Mini Courses: November 5th Ethics and Technology

November 5th
The Forgotten Theater: The Western Front in the Civil War

November 7th Expedition to the Ancient Mediterranean

November 10th History of Professional Baseball in Philadelphia

November 10th
The Fabulous Fifties: The Way it Was
or the Way We Think it Was

For more information, please see the college website: www.camdencc.edu/civic center

Center for Civic Leadership and Responsibility
Connector Building, room 103
Camden County College
PO Box 200, Blackwood, NJ 08012
Director: John L. Pesda
www.camdencc.edu/civiccenter





Steven Wright (l) and Bill Holdsworth (r) on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima - flanking their friend, and Iwo Jima survivor, Carl DeHaven.

Return to Iwo Jima

Thursday, February 11, 2016 - 7 p.m. Large Lecture Hall-Room 105, Connector building, Blackwood Campus

Old Baldy Civil War Round Table Clothing Items

1 - Short Sleeve Cotton Tee - \$23.00

Gildan 100% cotton, 6.1oz.

Color Options: Red, White, Navy, Tan

Sizes: Adult: S-3XL Adult Sizes: S(34-36); M(38-40); L(42-44);

XL(46-48); XXL(50-52); 3XL(54-55)

2 - Long Sleeve Cotton Tee - \$27.00

Gildan 100% cotton, 6.1oz. Color Options: Red, White, Navy

Sizes: Adult: S-3XL Adult Sizes: S(34-36); M(38-40); L(42-44);

XL(46-48); XXL(50-52); 3XL(54-55)

3 - Ladies Short Sleeve Polo - \$26.00

Anvil Pique Polo - 100% ring-spun cotton pique.

Color: Red, White, Navy, Yellow-Haze

Logo embroidered on left chest

Sizes: Ladeis: S-2XL Ladies

Chest Size Front: S(17"); M(19"); L(21"); XL(23"); 2XL(24")

4 - Mens Short Sleeve Polo Shirt - \$26.00

Anvil Pique Polo - 100% ring-spun cotton pique.

Color: Red, White, Navy, Yellow-Haze

Logo embroidered on left Sizes: Mens: S-3XL

Chest Size Front: S(19"); M(21"); L(23"); XL(25"); 2XL(27");

3XL(29")

5 - Fleece Lined Hooded Jacket - \$48.00

Dickies Fleece Lined Nylon Jacket 100% Nylon Shell;

100% Polyester Fleece Lining; Water Repellent Finish

Color: Navy or Black

Logo Embroidered on Left Chest

Size: Adult S-3XL

Chest Size: S(34-36"); M(38-40"); L(42-44"); XL(46-48");

2XL(50-52"); 3XL(54-56")

6 - Sandwich Caps - \$20.00

Lightweight Cotton Sandwich Bill Cap 100% Brushed Cotton;

Mid Profile Color: Navy/White or Stone/Navy

Adjustable Closure

Orders will be shipped 2 weeks after they are placed. All orders will be shipped UPS ground, shipping charges will be incurred. UPS will not ship to PO Boxes, please contact Jeanne Reith if you would like to make other shipping arrangements.

Items are non-returnable due to customization, please contact Jeanne Reith if you have questions on sizing.

Jeanne Reith Tuttle Marketing Services 1224 Gail Road West Chester, PA 19380 jeanne@tuttlemarketing.com 610-430-7432

https://tuttlemarketing.com/store/products/old-baldy-civil-war-round-table-651

Items can be seen and ordered from the Old Baldy Web Site or the Manufacture's Web Site.







FALL PLUS EVENTS

Assembled by Kathy Clark

GENERAL MEADE SOCIETY NEWS

Friday, November 6, 6pm

200th Anniversary Dinner for General George G. Meade. Meade Room at the Union League of Philadelphia. The dinner follows the 95th Anniversary of 1910 by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the 140th Anniversary of the awarding of the 4th Gold Medal of the Union League to General Meade in 1866. \$75.00 per person: cash bar. Make check out to The General George Meade Society and mail to Blair Thron, 1011 Essex Ave., Voorhees, NJ 08043, 856-429-8910

Friday, November 20, 6:30-9:30pm, Gettysburg

General Meade at at his 200th Anniversary Symposium at the Gettysburg Heritage Center. Register: www.gettysburgmuseum.com/ or contact Stephanie Lightner at 717-334-6245 or slightner@gettysburgmuseum.com

ONGOING EVENTS

Monmouth County Historical Society opens a new exhibition called "Beautiful Childhood: Portraits from the Permanent Collection" at the Monmouth County Historical Association's Museum at 70 Court Street. The exhibition created by Dr. Carol Lowrey, features 19th century portraits of children in various stages of development from toddlers to teenagers. For further information about the exhibition and association call 732-462-1466 or visit www.monmouth history.org.

NJ National Guard Museum is open for the summer which tells the history of NJ through the eyes of the military as well as an important state and national historical venue, where governors spent their summers and entertained Teddy Roosevelt, FDR, and Amelia Earhart, among others. The exhibit tells the story of NJ citizen soldiers from colonial days to present. Located in the historic National Guard Training Center at Camp Drive and Sea Girt Avenue, Sea Girt, NJ.

Independence Seaport Museum through December 31,

"Titanic Philadelphians", a spotlight on the personal lives of the city residents directly impacted by the Titanic's disastrous fate! The exhibits tell the accounts of 40-plus Philadelphians who sailed on the Titanic during the maiden voyage. Information: www.visitphillyseaport.org or 215-413-8655,

211 South Columbus Blvd. at Walnut Street.

"Disasters on the Delaware: Rescues on the River", a chance to explore the disasters that unfolded as the Delaware developed into the watery highway for trade and commerce while experiencing the misfortunes, the miracles and lessons learned. Through December 31, Independence Seaport Museum, www.phillyseaport.org.









OTHER EVENTS

Saturday, October 24, 1pm

Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences, 307 High Street, Mount Holly, NJ

Theorem painting, or painting with the aid of stencils, was a popular form of folk art in the 18th and 19th centuries. Theorem painting is most done on velvet fabric, which gives the painting a soft, lovely depth. Oil paint is presently used as it simulates the look of the antique theorems whose paint was hand mixed. Fruit and floral arrangements are the most popular subjects. Learn about the history of this little known art form of the early Americas and how it was use to decorate the homes of the colonists. Age 9 and up. Registration is required. 609-267-7111

Wednesday, November 4; 7PM

Jane Peters Estes, "Grave Matters - A Look at Victorian Mourning Customs". Bucks County Civil War Round Table, Doylestown Borough Hall, 57 W. Court Street, Doylestown,

Friday, November 6; 6PM

200th Anniversary Dinner for George G. Meade. This dinner follows the 9th Anniversary of 1910 by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the 140th Anniversary of the Awarding of the 4th Gold Medal of the Union League to George Meade in 1866. \$75/person which includes dinner, beverages, and Meade Anniversary Medal. Make checks out to the General Meade Society and mail to: Blair Thron, 1011 Essex Ave., Voorhees, NJ 08043: bkthron@verizon.net, or call 856-429-8913

Saturday, November 7; Noon - 4PM

Cannon Firing Demonstration. Artillery demonstrations will be conducted by Lamb's Artillery Company at noon, 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30 in the field behind the Visitor's Center Museum, Washington Crossing State Park, NJ. For information call 609-737-0623

Tuesday, November 10; 11AM

US Marine Corps Birthday Observance at the grave of General Jacob Zeilin, 7th Commandant; a Veteran's Day tour follows Servicemen Killed in Action Tour at Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, PA

Tuesday, November 10; 5:30PM

The Lincoln Group of NY; Dinner Meeting with guest speaker Richard Brookhiser speaking on his latest book, "Founders' Son: A Life of Abraham Lincoln". Cocktail hour, 5"30PM; 6"30PM dinner; 7"30PM program. For information: 3 West Club, 3 W. 51st Street, NYC: www.lincolngroupny.org/coming-events.html

Thursday, November 19; 7PM

North Jersey Civil War Round Table meeting presents Eleventh Annual Civil War Legal Presentation: "Critical Assessment of Congressional Efforts to Resolve Sectional Differences over Slavery, 1850-1861". John C. Maloney, Jr., Esq.: "Introduction to the Crittendem

Compromise and Corwin Amendment' G, William Sisley, Esq.: "The Compromise of 1850" Thomas V. Hildner, Esq.: "The Fugitive Slave Law" John J. Francis, Jr., Esq.: "The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1850'

Hon. Kenneth C. MacKenzie, J.S.C. (Ret.) Discussion Moderator; Haggerty Education Center, Frelinghuysen Arboretum,

353 E. Hanover Ave., Morris Township. Burlington County Library new series "Through Their Eyes"; presentations by the American Historical Theatre at the Burlington, Evesham, Cinnaminson, and Bordentown branches November 8; 2PM

at the Evesham Library: Traditional Celtic Tales from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales

November 14; 3PM

at the Cinnaminson Library: Stephen Hopkins, Mayflower passenger and assistant to the governor of Plymouth Colony

November 19; 7PM

at the Bordentown Library: Clara Barton

December 16; 7PM

at the Burlington County Library: George Washington

December 17; 7PM

at the Bordentown Library: Abraham Lincoln

WEB Site: http://oldbaldycwrt.org Email: oldbaldvcwrt@verizon.net Face Book: Old Baldy Civil War Round Table

Schedule of Old Baldy CWRT Speakers and Activities for 2015/2016

November 11 - Wednesday "A Country Worth Fighting For: The History of the 128th PA"

Paula Gidjunis (Historian)

December 10 - Thursday "Rock Carvings at Gettysburg" Randy Drais (Historian)

January 14 – Thursday "Your Family Military History" Roundtable Discussion Night

Share your Family's Military History

Questions to

Harry Jenkins - 302-834-3289 - hj3bama@verizon.net Herb Kaufman - 215-947-4096 - shkaufman2@yahoo.com Dave Gilson - 856-547-8130 - ddsghh@comcast.net

> Old Baldy Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia **Camden County College Blackwood Campus - Connector Building** Room 101 Forum, Civic Hall, Atrium

856-427-4022 oldbaldycwrt@verizon.net Founded January 1977

Annual Memberships **Students: \$12.50** Individuals: \$25.00

Families: \$35.00

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