

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
Vol. XLVI No. 1 September 2008



413th Regular Meeting

DATE: 5th September 2008

PLACE: Fairview Village, 200 Village Dr., Downers Grove, Il.

TIME: 8:00 PM

SPEAKER: Maryann Oblak

TOPIC: Col. Fremantle and his Three Months in the Confederacy

Welcome Back! I know after all that boring old rest and relaxation, travels to battlefields, attendance at re-enactments, museums, concerts, and extended reading on our dearest topic, you are all eager to get back in harness and confront the long slow decline of autumn. I know I was! (More on this later). I believe we have a topic that should get the year off to a roaring start and set a very high bar for the rest of our presentations.

I believe we all know at least one of the many foreign officers who came to witness the American Civil War either as participants or observers, and transmitted their impressions back to the home folks. Perhaps the most well-known is Col. Arthur Fremantle of Her Majesty's Venerable and Elite Coldstream Guards, due to his portrayal in the movie *Gettysburg* and his memoir, *Three Months in the Southern States*. Our presentation will be a description of life in the South in the words of this distinguished officer.

Maryann Oblak is a long-time student of the Civil War. Her first trip to Gettysburg was at the age of 14. She is a past member of two Civil War Roundtables in Ohio. She is currently a member of our own SCCWRT. We welcome her to the podium with open hearts and minds and look forward to her insights with great pleasure and eagerness!



JUNE MEETING

BY

RICK BENSON

On June 20, 2008, 59 members and guests attended the annual banquet of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable. The featured speaker was Cricket Bauer Pohanka, wife of the late Brian Pohanka, noted Civil War historian and presenter. (Heck of a re-enactor, too! -Ed.) Ms. Pohanka is on the Board of Trustees of the Civil War Preservation Trust and delivered a talk entitled "Fezzes and Battlefields: A Story of Zouave Soldiers and the Stuff They Left Behind".

Her subject was, specifically, the 5th New York Zouave regiment. She focused on the objects they left behind that all have meaning. She was able to obtain a personal copy of "Casey's Tactics" owned by Grover F. Timmons of this regiment. It came as a gift from Grover F. Timmons III as a "Thank You" to Brian Pohanka for his 30 years of work on the history of the 5th New York.

She then went into a brief history of the Zouaves themselves. These were initiated by the French in the 1830's during their campaigns in North Africa. These soldiers became very popular for several reasons. First, the reports of their heroism and deeds became widely known. Second, they had very handsome

and colorful uniforms. Third, a gentleman named Elmer Ellsworth took the "New York Fire Zouaves" drill team on a tour of the US. In the 1860's, it became a fad to emulate the Zouaves in both North and South.

The 7th New York State Militia decided to form a new unit when hostilities broke out. A well-off gentleman named Abram Duryee' funded the uniforms for this unit which became the 5th Zouaves. They were initially known as the "Advance Guard" and then "Duryee's Zouaves". Ms. Pohanka then showed a slide of an enlisted man named Benjamin Davis. His uniform was unusual in that it featured a sash. This is not part of either the French or Algerian uniform. However, Davis was a Mason and the sash is "Masonic" in nature. It was obvious, therefore, that there was room for individuality in dress. A typical officer's uniform was comprised of red pants, blue coat, and fez. These were among the more "flashy" of Civil War uniforms.

This unit began training at Fort Schuyler in April 1861. They did their drilling at the State College of New York Maritime College, which was the training grounds for the Merchant Marine. From there, they

were shipped to Fortress Monroe whence they departed on May 23, 1861 to seek out the enemy. They were engaged in battle at Big Bethel VA., and suffered a defeat. Cricket stated that there is nothing left of this battlefield today and all we have left are soldier's letters and engravings made from memory.

The 5th New York then went to Federal Hill in Baltimore. They were there for 8 months from July 22, 1861 keeping an eye on this city of divided loyalties. They became exceedingly unpopular when they placed some very heavy guns on the hill in order to be able to sweep the city should there be any trouble. All they wound up doing was "drill, drill, drill". Apparently the citizens warmed to them as there were many "War Weddings" here.

Cricket then told the story of Charles Hopkins, who died here of Typhoid Pneumonia. She stated this was a very significant event for her. She had been able to purchase his sash, 2 fezzes, 3 sets of leggings, plus his jacket and trousers and several letters. On this very day (of the banquet!) she got a call from the auction house where she had acquired the above items. The descendants of Charlie Hopkins had found his revolver and did she want that too? She did.

The next action for the 5th was at Gaines Mill in June 1862. Next up was 2nd Bull Run in August of the same year. The 5th suffered heavily here and Cricket had slides of several soldiers who died there along with letters and descriptions of the action. They saw no real action

at Antietam or Fredericksburg. On May 3, 1863 they were involved in the fighting at Chancellorsville. They were returned to New York City on May 8 and mustered out on May 14. These were the initial two-year recruits. Men who had enlisted for three years were transferred to the 146th or 155th New York, whose uniforms were very similar to those of the 5th.

Ms. Pohanka concluded her talk by showing slides of several 5th NY veterans. Their group was very active after the war supporting comrades, marching in parades, and dedicating a Warren Statue at 2nd Bull Run in 1906.

Our effusive thanks To Ms. Cricket Bauer Pohanka on a most interesting and illuminating presentation. A check for \$500 to the CWPT was presented to her at the conclusion of her talk.



PRESERVATION REPORT

BY

LEN OVERCASH, SR.

Franklin Life- July 2008- FRANKLIN, TN.- On June 19, Franklin's Charge, Inc., announced plans to purchase one acre of property located at 1219 Columbia Avenue. Formerly the home of the Kenneth Holt Construction Company, the property is across the street from the Carter House and adjacent to the Carter Cotton Gin property, now owned by the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County. The site is

considered by many to be “ground zero” of the Battle of Franklin.
Source: “SAVE THE FRANKLIN BATTLEFIELD” newsletter of stfb



THE VACANT CHAIR

The SCCWRT regrets to announce the passing of June Carlson, widow of the late Roger Carlson SCCWRT President 1980-81. May she rest in everlasting peace.



ALL FOR THE UNION

Welcome to new members Carolyn Richrath and Gerrie Sullivan. Welcome Aboard pards!

Our trip to the Civil War Museum in Kenosha is on for Oct.11. Details to follow.

Long time RT member, presenter, and past president Jim Soens is recovering at home from a recent hospitalization. To send messages of support and good wishes the address is: 7416 Oak, River Forest, IL. 60305

We need volunteers to person the table for the DuPage Co. Civil War Show on 9/20. Please sign up at the 9/5 meeting or call Jan at 630-830-7614.



EDITOR’S NOTES

As hinted earlier, this is my last year as Editor of the Outpost. I will be laying down my keyboard with the 06/09 production. Therefore, we need some spirited member to relieve me. Computer skills are nice, but not essential. (As you can see!)

The next board meeting will be at Fairview Village on 9/2/08 at 7:30 PM. The usual room. ?’s Call Jan.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 20-DuPage Co. CW Show
October 3-Tony Cichantk-Civilians of Gettysburg

THE SALT CREEK CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

www.saltcreekcwrt.org

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