

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
Vol. XLV No. 2 October 2007



404th Regular Meeting

DATE: 5th October 2007

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

TIME: 8:00 P.M.

SPEAKER: Paula Walker

TOPIC: "Major General Gouverneur Kemble Warren and the Battle of Five Forks"

The events of March 31-April 1, 1865, were fateful for many but for none more so than Maj. Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren, "The Hero of Gettysburg". The long-time commander of the Union's Fifth Army Corps had the heady wine of smashing, decisive, victory dashed from his lips by 48 hours of miscommunication and misdirection from above, culminating in humiliating removal from command, with the hint of an accusation of cowardice. Warren's career was ruined. In 1879 a Court Of Inquiry was convened which issued a report, exonerating him, in Nov. of 1882. Unfortunately, he had died three months before. Paula Walker will shed some light on the circumstances of the days that broke this fine man and commander.

Paula Walker has been a member of the SCCWRT for three years and is currently serving on the board. She is also a member of the South Suburban and Chicago RT's. She holds an A.S. degree in Business from Moraine Valley Community College and has completed the Roosevelt University para-legal program. She became interested in the CW through the Ken Burns series and commenced a biography of General Warren in 1992. Her research has taken her from Albany, NY. to the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the Smithsonian Institution. She is currently co-writing this with Robert Girardi. She resides in Tinley Park, Il., and is employed full-time as Commercial Lending Administrator at General Motors Acceptance Corporation. The SCCWRT voices an enthusiastic welcome to our member and friend



SEPTEMBER MEETING

BY

CINDY INTRAVARTOLO

On Sept. 7th, Marshall Krolick presented, "Council of War, July 2nd, 1863", before 65 members and guests at the 403rd regular meeting of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable.

Krolick began with events of June 28, when Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade was placed in command of the Army of the Potomac. Meade did not want the job but it was an order, not a request. He sent a message to Washington formally accepting his assignment. He interviewed several candidates for Chief of Staff, but wound up asking the current Chief, Daniel Butterfield, to stay on until he could find a successor. It was a decision he would later come to regret.

For the coming campaign the Commanding General USA, Henry Halleck tasked Meade with two major responsibilities: First, the Army must, at all times, cover Washington and Baltimore. Second, it must operate in such a way as to defeat the invading rebels.

By June 30, Meade had learned the location of the various Confederate corps, and thus had managed to have his army positioned between the Confederates and Washington. Now it was time to turn his attention to the defeat of

the Army of Northern Virginia. On July 1, Meade directed his troops toward Gettysburg, and also prepared a dispatch for all his corps commanders that would later be known as the Pipe Creek Circular. The purpose of the circular was to enable the army to make an orderly retreat to a strong defensive position, covering Washington, should it become necessary. However, after the campaign was over, this well-conceived plan, combined with other events, would threaten Meade's career and damage his reputation..

By 6 PM, on July 1st, Meade had determined that the battle would be fought at Gettysburg. After the furious fighting of July 2nd, Meade called eleven of his generals together to discuss the current situation. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the losses caused by the march to Gettysburg and the two days of fighting, and the condition and morale of the troops. These would determine the next day's course.

The discussion was initially informal. With the exception of General Newton, all agreed that the battlefield had been selected and that they needed to make the best of it. At this point, Butterfield suggested that three specific questions be formulated and each general polled as to his position. Meade agreed and the meeting became a formal council of war. The general consensus was that they would wait one day at Gettysburg, in a defensive posture, to see what the Confederates would do and then reconsider. Meade responded: "*Such then is the decision*", and adjourned the meeting. As all were leaving, Meade advised Gen. Gibbon that he would be attacked the next day. His reasoning was that since attacks on both flanks had failed, the next attempt would come in the center.

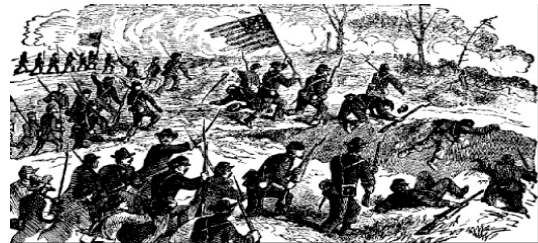
As most know, the events of the next day transpired as Meade predicted and the defeated Confederates withdrew to Virginia. Now the real battle began. President Lincoln was disappointed and angry at Meade's failure to pursue and destroy Gen. Lee's army. There were good reasons for this inaction and Meade was deeply hurt by this attitude. Indeed, he was never to get the respect and gratitude his victory should have afforded him.

Now the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War entered the picture. They disliked Meade as a conservative and sought to discredit him by charging that he had sought to retreat the night of July 2nd. A cabal of officers, all of whom had grudges

against Meade, Butterfield among them, gave spurious testimony to the willing ears of the committee. Several other officers supported Meade. In the end, the committee recommended Meade be fired, but Lincoln refused. The committee's final report stated Meade had intended to retreat, seeking to turn public opinion against him.

In the 1880's, after Meade's death, Gen. Doubleday wrote an article reviving the old accusations. However, Meade's son found Butterfield's minutes of the July 2nd meeting and effectively refuted the charge. The attempts to discredit Meade ended. However it is still true, as stated by Francis A. Walker in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, (Vol. III): "*There is probably no other battle of which men are so prone to think and speak without a conscious reference to the commanding general of the victorious party, as they are regarding Gettysburg*"

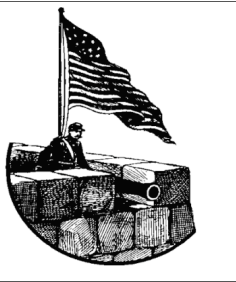
The SCCWRT wishes to thank Marshall Krolick for his fine presentation on the generalship of George Gordon Meade during the Battle of Gettysburg.



PRESERVATION REPORT
BY: LEN OVERCASH SR.
WASHINGTON D.C.-During a ceremony on Capitol Hill, the Civil

War Preservation trust (CWPT) honored Volunteer State Congressman Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.) with its' National Preservation Leadership Award for his stalwart support of Civil War battlefield preservation. Rep. Gordon has long been an advocate of the federal Civil war Battlefield Preservation Program, a matching grants program that has become the principal tool for protecting battlefield land in the US. Rep. Gordon is also co-chairman and a founding member of the Congressional Battlefields Caucus, an informal group of lawmakers with an abiding interest in historic preservation.

Source: Civil War Preservation Trust



ALL FOR THE UNION

Many Thanks to those who helped out at the Du Page County Show on the 15th!. It was a great success as always!

The 97th Regimental String Band will be appearing at the DuPage County History Museum on Saturday, Oct. 13, from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. Adult tickets are \$10. Seniors and Students are \$5. Tickets will be available at the October meeting. The museum is at 102 Wesley Ave. in Wheaton. Call 630-682-7343 for more information. Our roundtable will be providing some assistance to the museum, so please, come on out!



EDITOR'S NOTES

The next board meeting will be held at the home of Mary Lord, 200 Village Dr., Apt. 341, Downers Grove, IL. 7:30PM, 10/23/07. Phone: 630-769-6182

We need a new newsletter staff member! Cindy I. wishes to surrender the monthly meeting column. Apply to the editor or Pres. Rick Zarr. Free recorder!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2-Annual Battlefield Preservation Auction at the DuPage County Historical Society.
Dec. 7-Roger E. Bohn-Anecdotes and Adventures of the Civil War Blockade

January 4-Robert Girardi-TBA
February 1-Bjorn Skaptason-Shiloh
March 7-Eric Girardi-69th New York State Volunteers of the Irish Brigade
April 4-Phil Angelo-Allan Pinkerton
THE SALT CREEK CIVIL WAR
ROUNDTABLE

www.saltcreekcwrt.org

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