

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 70 No. 1

647th Meeting

August/September 2021

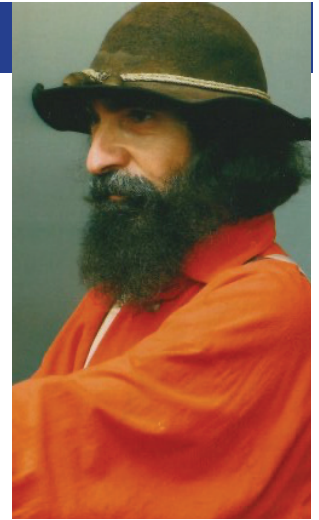


If you can't use a computer to Zoom and want to listen in by phone, leave your phone number at 718-341-9811 and we'll call you with the Zoom phone number and id codes.

- Guest:
Pat Falci
- Date:
September 8th
- Place:
Zoom
- Time:
at 7:00 pm

Pat Falci

This month's speaker is our own Pat Falci. Pat will be speaking live to the CWRT of Merrimac, who have graciously allowed us to Zoom in on the meeting.



Pat has portrayed General A.P. Hill in the movie "Gettysburg," and was historical consultant for it and its prequel, the movie "Gods and Generals." Pat also appeared in "Rough Riders" and has served as historical consultant to numerous screenwriters, directors, producers, and actors for movies and documentaries. The recipient of many awards, Pat travels across the country lecturing, doing school programs, and enlightening the public about "Lee's Forgotten General." Pat is also the first 3-time President of the CWRT of NY, meeting in NYC. Pat will portray General A.P. Hill as he regales us with his talk entitled: "SADDLE UP WITH GENERAL HILL: FAMOUS GENERALS AND THEIR WAR HORSES."

Question of the month:

How many men were in the Pennsylvania units that reached Washington on April 18, 1861, constituting its only important defense?

Dues are due

Dues for the 2021 – 2022 season is \$50 for the year. We kindly ask that you send your dues in not later than October 15.

The address is:

Connors and Sullivan, PPLC
Attn: CWRTNY Membership
7408 5th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11209

Note from the Editor

This will be an exciting year for our Round Table. We will be back to in-person meetings starting in October, but it gets even better, it will also be the start of our 70th year as the CWRT of New York. How great is that! Even more exciting, we will be back at our old haunt, the 3West Club starting in October. Can't get any better? Wait. This month, our own Pat Falci will be speaking at the Merrimac Round Table and we get to Zoom in on the excitement. So, keep tuned for the excitement ahead.

2021 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2021

• September 8th (Zoom) •
Patrick Falci

• October 13th (in-person) •
Wayne Motts
Gettysburg Foundation &
Spangler Farm

• November 10th •
TBD

President's Message

On behalf of the entire 2021-2022 CWRT/NY Leadership Team and Board of Directors, we welcome you to the new meeting year.

First, we should all thank Past President Kris Kasnicki with a "well done" for his extraordinary job in leading us through a difficult and unprecedented year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For managing to keep us going with a regular schedule of "Zoom" meetings, Kris certainly deserves our heartfelt thanks.



For the coming year, we plan to hold our "live" meetings back on our traditional second Wednesday of the month at the 3 West Club on W 51st Street (a place with which you should all be familiar) – except

for this month, on Weds Sept 8, when we will still be on Zoom with our own Patrick Falci – who will be speaking in Massachusetts to another Round Table about some well known mounts of famous Civil War commanders.

Please keep alert for further information about the coming year through the Dispatch, and other email notifications from the Club, in what we will hope to be our year of returning to "normalcy".

PAUL WEISS



Answer:

About 500, five companies.

From Civil War Trivia and Fact Book by Webb Garrison

THE DISPATCH



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Civil War Events During the Month of Aug/Sept 1863

AUGUST

- 1 Federal cavalry advance from Witteburg on campaign to capture Little Rock, Arkansas
- 8 Robert E. Lee offers to resign as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia
- 17 **Federals begin bombardment of Fort Sumter as siege of Fort Wagner continues**
- 26 Engagement at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia
- 27 Skirmish at Bayou Meto (Reed's Bridge), Arkansas

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Laird Rams detained at Liverpool
- 6 Confederates evacuate Fort Wagner and Morris Island, South Carolina
- 8 **Confederates repulse attack at Sabine Pass (Fort Griffin), Texas**
- 9 Federal army enters Chattanooga, Tennessee
- 10 Little Rock, Arkansas captured by Union forces
- 15 Lincoln suspends writ of habeas corpus
- 18 Confederates force their way across Chickamauga Creek
- 18 Skirmish at Bristol in east Tennessee
- 19 Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia
- 20 Day two of the Battle of Chickamauga, Union troops retreat to Chattanooga, Tennessee

From: *American Battlefield Trust*

SUGGESTIONS

The Dispatch welcomes articles, book reviews (non-fiction only) and suggestions. Just send them in to our mailing address.

Battle of the Sabine Pass

Sep 8, 1863

With a de facto French government under Maximilian south of the Rio Grande, the Confederates hoped to establish trade between Texas and Mexico to obtain much needed supplies. The Lincoln administration, aware of Confederate intentions, sought to establish a military presence in Texas to discourage Mexican influence. A Union force in place near Beaumont, 30 miles inland from the mouth of the Sabine River, would cut the last railroad between Texas and the rest of the Confederacy and could possibly threaten Houston. At 6:00 am on the morning of September 8, 1863, a Union flotilla of four gunboats and seven troop transports steamed into Sabine Pass and up the Sabine River with the intention of reducing Fort Griffin outside of Sabine City and landing troops there. As the gunboats approached Fort Griffin, they came under accurate fire from the guns there. The fort's small force of 44 men, under command of Lt. Richard W. Dowling, disabled two ships, captured the gunboat Clifton with about 200 prisoners, and forced the Union flotilla to retire. The Confederate defenders suffered zero casualties and Union operations in the area

ceased. The heroics at Fort Griffin - 44 men stopping a Union expedition - inspired other Confederates and became known as one of the most lopsided battles of the war.



THE PRIDE OF BATTERY B *by Frank H. Gassaway*

This poem is a ‘gem of the purest ray serene.’ It recounts an incident of the late Civil War. A little orphan child, a war waif, adopted by a battery of the Southern troops, is so distressed by the failure of the tobacco supplies of her guardians, that she escapes from her tent, and, crossing to the enemy’s entrenchment, she begs a supply from the Yankee soldiers. The latter send her back well supplied with the weed so dear to the soldier’s heart, and during the rest of the engagement the gunners on the Yankee side refused to direct their shells in the vicinity of the child’s detachment. This poem has enjoyed remarkable popularity and has been widely copied in England and elsewhere.

South Mountain towered on our right, far off the river lay,
And over the wooded height we held their lines at bay.

At last the mutt’ring guns were stilled; the day died slow
and wan;

At last the gunners’ pipes were filled, the Sergeant’s
yarns began.

When, --as the wind a moment blew aside the
fragrant flood

Our brierwoods raised, --within our view a little
maiden stood.

A tiny tot of six or seven, from fireside fresh she seemed
(Of such a little one in heaven one soldier often dreamed).

And, as we stared, her little hand went to her curly head
In grave salute: ‘And who are you?’ at length the
Sergeant said.

‘‘And where’s your home?’’ he growled again. She lisped
out, ‘‘Who is me?’’

Why, don’t you know? I’m little Jane, the Pride of
Battery ‘B.’

My home? Why, that was burned away, and pa and
ma are dead,

And so, so I ride the guns all day along with Sergeant Ned.

And I’ve a drum that’s not a toy, a cap with feathers, too,

And I march beside the drummer boy on Sundays
at review;

But now are ‘bacca’s all give out, the men can’t have
their smoke,

And so they’re cross --why, even Ned won’t play with
me and joke,

And the big Colonel said to-day --I hate to hear
him swear--

He’d give a leg for a good pipe like the Yanks had
over there

And so I thought when beat the drum and the big guns were
still,

I’d creep beneath the tent and come out here across the hill,

And beg, good Mister Yankee men, you’d give me
some tobac;

Please do--when we get some again I’ll surely bring it back.

Indeed I will, for Ned --says he--if I do what I say,

I’ll be a general yet, maybe and ride a prancing bay.’’

We brimmed her tiny apron o’er; you should have heard
her laugh

As each man from his scanty store shook out a generous half.

To kiss the little mouth stooped down a score of grimy men,

Until the Sergeant’s husky voice said ‘‘Tention, squad’’
and then

We gave her escort, till good night the pretty waif we bid.

And watched her toddle out of sight--or else ‘twas tears
that hid

Her tiny form--nor turned about a man, nor spoke a word,

‘Till after while a far, hoarse shout upon the wind was heard!

We sent it back--then cast sad eye upon the scene around,

A baby’s hand had touched the tie that brothers once
had bound.

That’s all--save when the dawn woke gain the work of hell,

And through the sullen clouds of smoke the screaming
missiles fell;

Our General often rubbed his glass and marveled much
to see

Not a single shell that whole day fell in the lines of
Battery ‘B’.

From: *discoverypoeetry.com*

Book Review

The Battle of the Wilderness

May 5 – 6, 1864

by Gordon C. Rhea

It has been referred to as “more a gigantic piece of Indian fighting or bushwhacking of pioneer days than a battle”, but there was much more to it. Gordon Rhea has brought form to the chaos that was the Battle of The Wilderness. He begins with organizational issues. Commonly thought of as the first “Grant vs. Lee” battle, Rhea makes clear the organizational issues that more realistically characterize this as a “Lee vs. Meade and Burnside” battle. This is among the problems faced by Ulysses S. Grant, who, being recently promoted to Lieutenant General and commander of all Union armies, tried to coordinate both Major General George Gordon Meade’s Army of The Potomac and Major General Ambrose Burnside’s IX Corps. Coming from the Western Theater and his victories at Forts Henry and Donelson, Vicksburg and Chattanooga, Grant was unaccustomed to the politics that were rife in the Eastern Theater and resulted in at his awkward organizational structure. Adding to these problems, Meade had to deal with his fiery Cavalry Corps commander, Major General Phil Sheridan, with whom he had significant philosophical difference resulting in a poor working relationship. Sheridan, in turn, had an inexperienced 2nd Division commander in Brigadier General James H. Wilson to whom, unfortunately for the Union, was assigned the key role of screening the Union right flank after they crossed the Rapidan River.

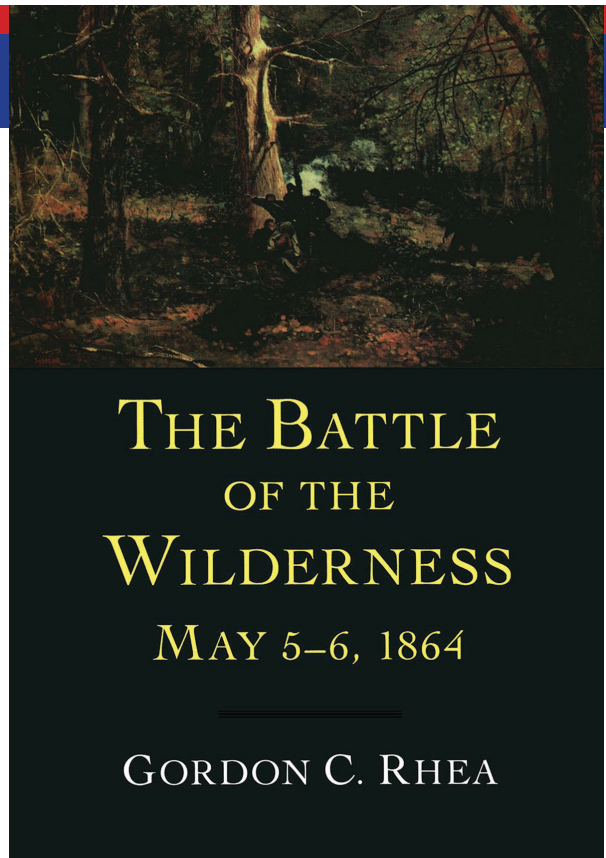
On the Confederate side, Lee had to deal with a scattered Army of Northern Virginia and untried Corps commanders in Lieutenant Generals Richard Ewell and A. P. Hill. Neither performed particularly well at Gettysburg or its aftermath. Complicating this further is the fact that Lieutenant General James Longstreet’s I Corps only recently returned from their foray into Georgia and Tennessee, where they participated in the victory at Chickamauga and the unsuccessful siege of Knoxville, and were a couple of days march from the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Detrimental to both sides was the terrain in The Wilderness, which presented a severe challenge to communication and a tremendously difficult place to

maneuver troops. Participant observations are rife with descriptions of the terrain and its unsuitability for movement of large bodies of troops.

The resulting chaos is well described by Rhea, but he manages to fit these actions into a larger context. He interprets the Saunders’ Field debacle as resulting from Meade’s impatience - interpreted by the author as Meade’s attempt to demonstrate his aggressiveness to his new “boss”, Grant - ordering Major General Gouverneur K. Warren to “open the ball” with his V Corps without waiting for support. The resulting uncoordinated assaults resulted in bloody Union repulses. Meade repeated this mistake on the Union’s southern flank, urging Major General Winfield S. Hancock to attack with his partial II Corps, where they joined Brigadier General George W. Getty’s division at the key intersection of the Brock and Orange Plank roads. Try as he might, Grant could not compel Major General Ambrose E. Burnside to move quickly enough to conform to, or coordinate with, either of the Union flanks, creating a unified front with which to assault the Confederate lines. Instead, the IX Corps was too late to support the offensives on either the Union’s northern or southern flank.

The resulting two-day battle and its associated cavalry actions are well described by Rhea, and the book includes 20 maps which help immeasurably! What was

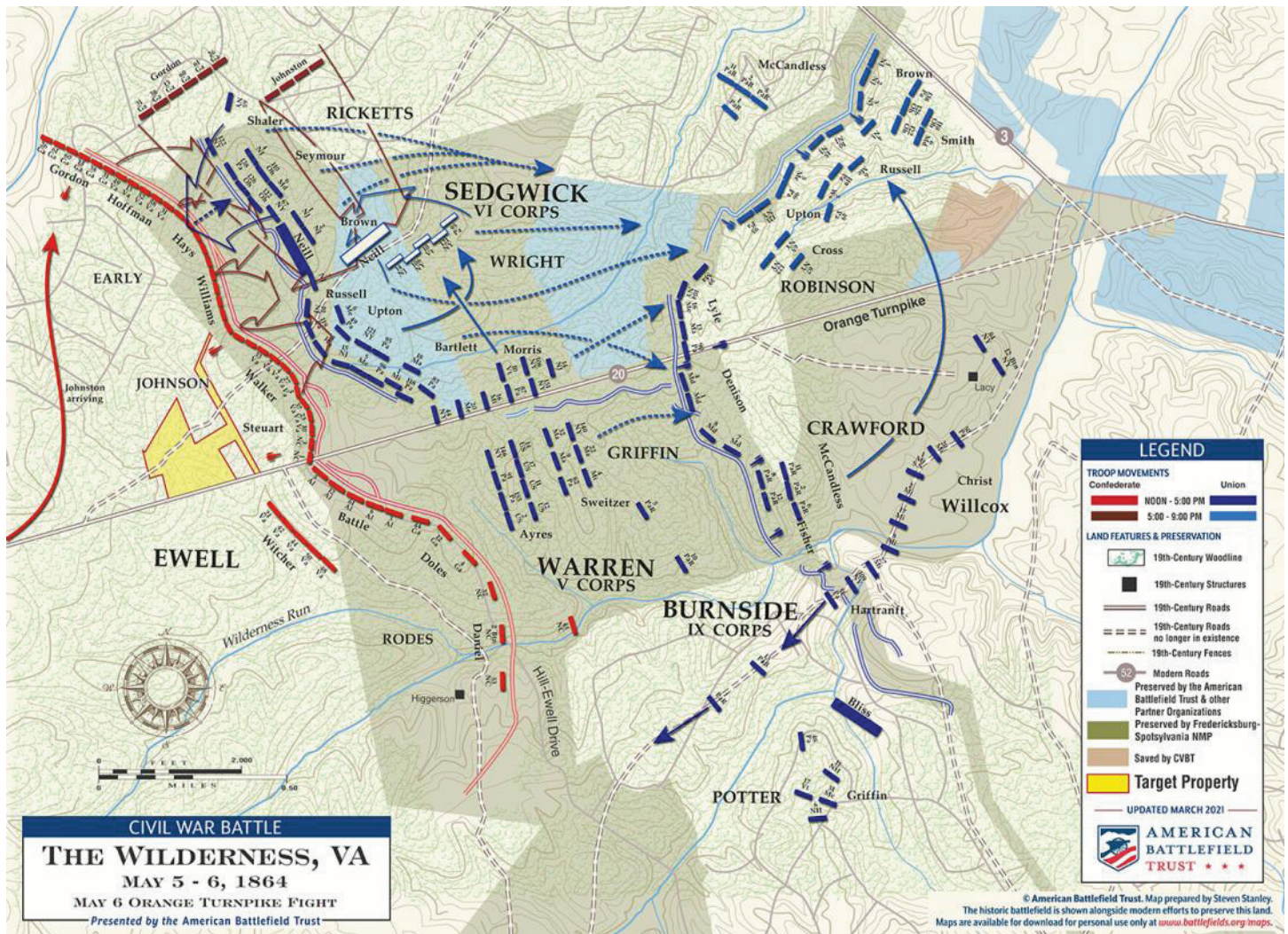


previously a wild melee is, in the author's skilled hands, an action which, despite really being two separate battles (at Saunders' Field and the Brock Road/Orange Plank Road intersection), was composed of a series of lost opportunities on both sides. Grant failed in his efforts to coordinate the actions of his commanders and their Corps who, in turn, frequently ordered actions based on poor or incomplete information. (Actually, this characteristic began before the two sides were even engaged when, as mentioned earlier, Phil Sheridan gave James Wilson, new to the cavalry arm, the critical role of shielding the Federal right flank during their intended march through the Wilderness). Lee also had problems with his Corps commanders: A. P. Hill in allowing his exhausted Corps to rest rather than entrench, organize and realign during the night of May 5/6 to face the expected Union morning assault; Dick Ewell in his reluctance to approve Gordon's proposed Flank March over Jubal Early's resistance until late in the afternoon (near dark) on May 6. James Longstreet's critical wounding at the peak of success

during his May 6 flanking movement didn't help matters, either!

The Wilderness action initiated a new, terrible phase of the War as the first action of Grant's Overland Campaign and is deserving of the treatment it is given in this highly recommended book. As an aside, Rhea has also authored an additional four books leading the reader through the horrors of Spotsylvania Court House, the North Anna, Cold Harbor, ending with Grant crossing of the James River and the early Petersburg actions. The associated cavalry actions (including Yellow Tavern) of the campaign are also explained in the context of Grant's thinking and covered in some detail. Each book is extremely helpful in understanding the tactical components of the Campaign, during which Grant never lost sight of his strategic objective of destroying the Army of Northern Virginia.

Reviewed by John Allen



The Second Battle of Fort Sumter

The Second Battle of Fort Sumter was fought on August 17, 1863, in Charleston Harbor. Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard, who had commanded the defenses of Charleston and captured Fort Sumter in the first battle of the war, was in overall command of the defenders. In the battle, Union forces under Major General Quincy Gillmore attempted to retake the fort at the mouth of the harbor. Union gunners pummeled the fort from their batteries on Morris Island. After a severe bombing of the fort, Beauregard, suspecting an attack, replaced the artillerymen and all but one of the fort's guns with 320 infantrymen, who repulsed the naval landing party. Gillmore had reduced Fort Sumter to a pile of rubble, but the Confederate flag still flew over the ruins.

From: *Wikipedia*



Photograph taken September 8, 1863, shows the breach compromised at Fort Sumter's wall facing Morris Island during bombardment of Fort Sumter. The naval party attempted to enter the fort here.

