



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

**Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
November 2016, Volume 13, Issue 11**

Speaker: Calvin Zon
Topic: "Divided We Fall: The Confederacy's Collapse from Within"
When: Monday, November 14, 2016
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm

Abstract on our Scheduled Speaker, Calvin Zon, Monday, November 14, 2016

Our scheduled speaker for November 14th, will be Calvin Goddard Zon, a third-generation Washingtonian. Zon earned a BA from Davidson College, where he majored in American history, and he has an MA from American University. He was a staff writer for the Washington Star daily newspaper for nine years, later he was a staff writer for the United Mine Workers Journal, an organizer for the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, and a copy editor for Bloomberg BNA's Daily Labor Report. He has written for the Civil War News, the Civil War Times, the Progressive, the National Catholic Reporter, and In These Times. He is a past commander of the Lincoln-Cushing camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and a member of the Washington DC Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States. He has served six years in the U.S. Army Reserve.

His first book, *The Good Fight That Didn't End: Henry P. Goddard's Accounts of Civil War and Peace*, is based on the letters and writings of his great-grandfather, a journalist and captain of the 14th Connecticut Infantry who fought at Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville and he was twice wounded. The book, is "*highly recommended*" by the Civil War News, includes postwar observations of race relations in Connecticut, Maryland and in the South and of his great-grandfather's friend and Hartford, Connecticut neighbor Samuel Clemens.

Zon's second book, *Divided We Fall: The Confederacy's Collapse From Within*, is the topic of his presentation. It is a state by state account of the active opposition to the Confederacy in the 11 seceded states. The Civil War News writes, "Certainly this volume will deflate the idea of a solid front in the South. It is highly recommended to readers interested in knowing more about the South's internal politics during the Civil War."

"Dawn of Victory: Breakthrough at Petersburg; March 25 to April 2, 1865"

Presented by Edward Alexander

Review of our October 2016 program by Greg Mertz

Holding Petersburg became critical for the Confederacy throughout the last year of the war. All supplies going into the capitol city of Richmond passed through Petersburg. If Petersburg fell, Richmond must by necessity fall as well. In the early stages of the Siege of Petersburg, the Union army tried to break through the Confederate lines, but speaker Edward Alexander pointed out that they did not launch a single frontal attack after the failure of the Crater explosion on July 30, 1864, until the final assault made on April 2, 1865.

Thus, after the Confederate 2nd Corps returned to Petersburg following the 1864, Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Confederate army commander Robert E. Lee with only 35,000 muskets present for duty, did not have the strength to detach any more troops from his shrinking army. Union General-in-Chief Ulysses S. Grant not only had more than twice as many troops as Lee. Grant had also received Phillip Sheridan's cavalry corps from the Valley along with some troops from in front of Richmond, just before the final operations at Petersburg. Union activities after the Crater consisted of a series of moves to the west to gain control of another railroad or another road and to therefore force the Confederates to further stretch their already overextended lines.

Key to the final operation was Sheridan's cavalry sweeping through Dinwiddie Court House, 14 miles southwest of Petersburg, enroute to the Confederate flank due west of Petersburg. Confederate General George Pickett, who had recently been transferred from Richmond to serve south of the James River, advanced far south of the Confederate position to attack Sheridan on March 31, 1865. Alexander called the Battle of Dinwiddie Court House Pickett's best day of the war, as he bested Sheridan. Although victorious, Pickett had advanced so far south that he had nearly gotten cut off from the rest of the army. An angry Lee ordered Pickett to defend at all hazards the intersection of Five Forks, just about five miles north of Dinwiddie Court House.

An embarrassed Sheridan was anxious to retaliate immediately. Sheridan asked Grant to send the Union VI corps to the support of the cavalry. Sheridan had worked in tandem with that corps in the Shenandoah Valley. The only troops that Grant could spare, however, were the V corps under General Gouverneur K. Warren. Though Sheridan was not pleased to work with Warren, Grant allowed the cavalry commander the authority to relieve Warren should he prove unsatisfactory.

On April 1, 1865, Sheridan attacked at Five Forks. Sheridan assigned Warren to attack a particular point where he believed the Confederate left flank to be, but he was wrong and Warren advanced past the Confederate flank into their rear. Sheridan was furious and relieved Warren. Pickett was at that time celebrating his victory at Dinwiddie Court House by holding a shad bake, unaware that his troops were being overwhelmed by Sheridan and Warren.

The Union army was then in position to launch an all-out attack on the thin Confederate line scheduled for April 2, 1865. While innovative ideas seemed to be lacking during the Civil War, the Union VI corps might be considered an exception, as they had prepared for their upcoming frontal attack in a different manner than any of the other Union generals.

The VI corps had a history of trying various new things and they would borrow innovations from four previous battles for their tactics for the April 2 breakthrough attempt. On May 3, 1863, at the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, the VI corps took Marye's Heights from the Confederates by attacking with superior numbers of troops. On November 7, 1863, two VI corps brigades attacked a force of the same size at Rappahannock Station, but did so under the cover of darkness to conceal their true numbers and they captured a vast majority of their opponents. On May 10, 1864, at Spotsylvania Court House, VI corps brigade commander Emory Upton led a column of regiments instructed to keep moving and not to open fire – to rely solely upon the bayonet – utilizing revised tactics to pierce through Confederate earthworks. Then at Cold Harbor on June 1, 1864 – two days before the more famous disastrous Union attack – the VI corps availed themselves of the protection of a ravine to breach the Confederate line, but did not receive support.

Elements of each of these attacks would enable the VI corps to succeed on April 2, 1865, in their attack across Jones Farm. But first the corps needed to push the Confederate picket line further back to its main line, allowing the VI corps to form up undetected in front of the Union fortifications, and to allow their generals a better opportunity to examine the terrain and the Confederate position. In their reconnaissance the VI corps officers discovered a ravine called Arthur's Swamp.

As at Second Fredericksburg, the VI corps enjoyed overwhelming numbers – 14,000 vs 2,800 Confederates. As at Rappahannock Station, the corps advanced under the cover of darkness – this time during the pre-dawn, stepping off at 4:40 am. As at Spotsylvania, the men wearing the Greek cross would use a massed formation. And as at Cold Harbor, the troops would follow a ravine; confusion of advancing in the dark would be reduced by following the marshy ground of Arthur's swamp all the way to the Confederate lines.

The first soldier to reach the Confederate lines and to scale the earthworks was Captain Charles Gould. As a child Gould had been badly scalded by a kettle of boiling apple cider, and his mother had always tried to be protective of her injured son. However, Captain Gould as a youth had gained the reputation of being a young daredevil. Gould was bayoneted in the chin during the breakthrough, he then killed his attacker with his sword and pulled out the bayonet from his chin, only to be hit over the head with a sword and then stabbed in the back by still another bayonet. Gould lived and he was awarded the Medal of Honor. The Vermont Brigade had pierced the Confederate line and soon the entire VI corps overwhelmed the Confederate position – this was the only successful attack of April 2, along the entire Confederate line. Lee then had no choice, but to order the complete evacuation of Petersburg and of Richmond. The end of the war was close at hand.

The RVCWRT Bulletin Board

The RVCWRT maintains a special bulletin board that is placed against the right side wall as guests enter the dining room. This Bulletin Board is utilized during each of our dinner meetings. Members will find many different Civil War articles placed there. They are there to be requested by members for their personal reading. Also, there will be information posted on the bulletin board about upcoming Civil War related events along with various items of interest. Along with the various posted announcements,

Civil War articles and related material will be placed there. These may each be requested and borrowed to read.

The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg

Bob Jones

As a courtesy the RVCWRT will be providing as a regular feature each month, the ongoing scheduled speakers for the CWRTF's Program Year. The *Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg* normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except for the meeting to be held on the third Wednesday in November) and there will be no meeting scheduled in December 2016, or in July and August 2017. Their Dinner Meetings are held at the MWW's Jepson Center located at 1119 Hanover St. and their dinner cost is \$32.00 for each person. Reservations can be made by telephoning 540-361-2105. Their scheduled speaker for November 21st will be Robert Lee Hodge – Filming the Civil War with Historical Accuracy.



CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers 2016 – 2017 Program Year

- *NOV. 16, 2016 ROBERT LEE HODGE – Filming the Civil War with Historic Accuracy
- JAN. 25, 2017 DWIGHT HUGHES – *CSS Shenandoah*
- FEB. 22, 2017 GREG MERTZ, NPS – *Shiloh: Attack at Daylight and Whip Them*
- MAR. 22, 2017 FRED RAY – *Sharpshooter: Eugene Blackford, CSA*
- APR. 26, 2017 TERESA ROANE – Minorities in the Confederate Army
- MAY 24, 2017 PATRICK A. SCHROEDER, NPS - Pardons and the Amnesty Oath/Oath of Allegiance of Confederate Soldiers
- *JUNE 21, 2017 SHANNON. PRITCHARD – Collecting the Confederacy

(*These dates occur on the 3rd Wednesday of the month)

**Reminder: Contact Bob Jones to order Dinner in advance
To Confirm Reservations: Telephone 540-399-1702 or e-mail
cwrtdinner@yahoo.com or bobnpeg1954@gmail.com**

RVCWRT History Alert Program

RVCWRT member Alan Zirkle, provides a totally free service to all RVCWRT members notifying his many subscribers about upcoming local history events in and around the Fredericksburg area. This is done via his subscribers recorded e-mail address, concerning upcoming history-related events. To receive Alan's important messages just send an e-mail to Alan Zirkle @ az@azirkle.com.

John Brown's Harper's Ferry Raid

October 16, 1859

Jim Smithfield

John Brown, along with 18 cohorts, marched into an unsuspecting Harper's Ferry, seizing the federal complex there and meeting very little resistance. The federal complex consisted of an armory, arsenal, and engine house. Brown then sent a patrol out into the countryside to contact the local slaves and to collect several hostages. These hostages included, Lewis Washington, the great grandnephew of General George Washington, John Brown then sat down to await the coming events. The slaves in the area did not rise to Brown's support as he had expected. However, local citizens and militia surrounded Brown and his group, gunfire was exchanged that killed two townspeople and eight of Brown's company. Troops that arrived from Washington were placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee, who had been directed to arrest John Brown. On Lee's orders the U.S. Marines led by 1st Lieutenant Israel Greene stormed the engine house, where Brown had withdrawn, wounding and capturing him along with members of his group. The Marines then turned their captives over to the Virginia State authorities to be tried for treason. Brown was quickly tried and sentenced to hang on December 2, 1859.

Brown's strange effort to start a war of rebellion using the slave population of the South was over in less than 36 hours after it had begun. However, the consequences of John Brown's raid would last much longer. In the North, his raid was greeted by many with widespread admiration. While most Northerners recognized that the raid itself, was the actions of a madman, some Northerners did, however, admire Brown's zeal and courage.

On the day of Brown's execution, Church bells pealed throughout the North. Songs and paintings were created in his honor and Brown was turned into an instant martyr. In fact, Ralph Waldo Emerson predicted that Brown would make *"the gallows as glorious as the cross."* The majority of Northern newspapers did, however, denounce Brown's raid. The Republican Party adopted a specific plank condemning John Brown and his ill-fated plan. Yet, that was not at all what the majority of the South saw happening!

Most Southerners were shocked and outraged by the events and their outcome in the North. How could anyone be sympathetic to a fanatic who would destroy their property and threaten their very way of life? How could the South live under a government whose citizens regarded the fanatic John Brown as a martyr? The Southern newspapers labeled the entire North as John Brown sympathizers. Southern politicians blamed the Republican Party and falsely claimed that Abraham Lincoln supported Brown's intentions. Moderate voices supported compromise and both sides grew silent amid the gathering storm. In this climate of fear and hostility, the election year of 1860 opened ominously. The election of Abraham Lincoln became unthinkable to many in the South. Of course, the Civil War did not immediately follow Brown's raid, but it was very soon after it.



John Brown's fanaticism affected many of those people around him, most especially his very own family. During his ill-fated raid on Harper's Ferry, two of John Brown's sons were killed.

Who we are?

The *Drum and Bugle Newsletter* is published monthly, by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Each month, The Drum and Bugle newsletter is also placed on our web-site, www.RVCWRT.org. Yearly membership dues are \$35.00 for individuals, \$45.00 for families, and only \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the ongoing preservation of Civil War sites.

The RVCWRT Executive Committee:

President/Dinner Meetings:	Bob Jones	Webmaster:	Open
Vice President:	John Sapanara	Membership:	Ryan Quint
Secretary:	Mike Burns	Research and Historian:	Joyce Darr
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