

# ***The Knapsack***

***Raleigh Civil War Round Table***

***The same rain falls on both friend and foe.***

***June 9, 2014***  
***Our 160th Meeting***



***Volume 14***  
***Number 6***

<http://www.raleighcwrt.org>

## **Earl Hess to Speak at June 9 Meeting On the Battles at Petersburg**

Award-winning author and historian, Dr. Earl J. Hess, will be the presenter at the Raleigh Civil War Round Table's June 9 meeting.



Earl has pursued the study of the Civil War since he was a teenager in Missouri. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in history at Southeast Missouri State University. In 1986, Earl received his Ph.D. in American studies with a concentration in history from Purdue University.

Earl has taught at the University of Georgia, Texas Tech University, and the University of Arkansas. Since 1989, he has worked at the Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn., where he is the Stewart McClelland Chair.

Among the many books that Earl has authored are *Kennesaw Mountain: Sherman, Johnston, and the Atlanta Campaign* (2013), *The Civil War in the West: Victory and Defeat from the Appalachians to the Mississippi* (2012), *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat: Reality and Myth* (2008), *Lee's Tar Heels: The Pettigrew-Kirkland-MacRae Brigade* (2002), *The Knoxville Campaign: Burnside and Longstreet in East Tennessee* (2012), and *Pickett's Charge: The Last Attack at Gettysburg* (2001), for which he received a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 2002.

In addition to those titles, Earl wrote *In the Trenches at Petersburg: Field Fortifications and Confederate Defeat* (2009) and *Into the Crater: The Mine Attack at Petersburg* (2010). His talk to the Raleigh Civil War Round Table at our June 2014 meeting is on the battles at Petersburg.

Earl will bring copies of some of his books to the meeting for purchase. Go online to [http://www.love-and-learning.info/books\\_on\\_civil\\_war\\_history.htm](http://www.love-and-learning.info/books_on_civil_war_history.htm) for details about his publications.

### **~ The Mine Attack at Petersburg ~**

In an attempt to cut off the important railroad lines into Richmond, Union forces launched several attacks on Confederate troops entrenched around Petersburg, Va., in June 1864.



Seeking to break a stalemate, approval was given for Pennsylvania miners to dig a tunnel under the enemy's fortifications. Weeks later, on July 30, some 320 kegs of gunpowder were detonated and Union forces rushed into the gap. The assault, which involved black troops, was a disaster.



# The Sesquicentennial



June 1864

## A Setback for Sherman

After leaving Chattanooga, Tenn., on his Atlanta Campaign, Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman drove Confederate forces under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston back toward Atlanta in a series of flanking attacks during May and early June 1864.

On June 27, Sherman altered his approach in the campaign and made a frontal assault on Johnston at Kennesaw Mountain. Believing the defenders were stretched too thin, Sherman ordered a failed attack that would result in a tactical defeat.

Despite succeeding in repulsing the Federal attacks, Johnston again withdrew his troops back toward Atlanta after his left flank was threatened.



**Leonidas Polk**

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On June 14, during Sherman's push toward Atlanta, Confederate Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk, "the Fighting Bishop," was killed by artillery fire on Pine Mountain, Ga. Polk, an Episcopal bishop, had been a former classmate of President Jefferson Davis at West Point before attending seminary.

Also in June 1864, President Abraham Lincoln was nominated for a second term, Confederate cavalry under Nathan Bedford Forrest defeated Union horsemen at Brice's Cross Roads in Mississippi, Salmon P. Chase resigned as the U.S. Treasury Secretary, and Union forces would be victorious in battles at Old River, Ark. and Cynthia, Ky.

## Union Defeat at Cold Harbor

On June 3, three Union corps under the overall command of Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant attacked Confederate defensive positions at Mechanicsville, Va., in what would be a costly assault.



Bogged down by natural obstacles and subject to enfilading Confederate fire, the attacking Federals suffered some 7,000 casualties in about 30 minutes. Overall, Union losses would be nearly 13,000 in killed, wounded, and missing, while the Confederate defenders had total casualties of about 4,600.

## The Sinking of the *Alabama*

On June 19, the very successful Confederate commerce raider CSS *Alabama* was sunk by the USS *Kearsage* off the coast of Cherbourg, France.



**The Battle of Cherbourg**

The *Alabama* was built in England in 1862 for the Confederate navy and captained by Raphael Semmes. The raider sank or captured 65 Union ships all over the world, with most of her victims being merchant vessels. More than 40 of the *Alabama's* sailors died in her final battle.

## Confederate MOH

The Medal of Honor was established by the United States Congress during the Civil War as the highest military decoration for valor a soldier that fought for his country could receive. 1,522 such awards were given to Union soldiers during the war.



In August 1862, legislation to recognize similar exceptional deeds by men fighting for the Southern cause was introduced in the Confederate Congress, but no medals were actually issued. In 1968, the Sons of Confederate Veterans approved what is known as the Confederate Medal of Honor and the first was awarded in 1977 to Sgt. Richard Rowland Kirkland for risking his life to bring water to wounded Union and Confederate soldiers during the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862.

The medal pictured above was awarded in 1992 to Pvt. Billy Hughes for sacrificing his life to save a friend at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain.

## The *Planter* is Likely Found

On May 13, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced it had found the probable location of the steamer *Planter*.



The ship gained fame 150 years ago when Robert Smalls, a Southern slave and the ship's steersman, guided the vessel past Confederate defenses at Charleston Harbor and surrendered it to Federal naval forces. The *New York Herald* called the event "one of the most daring and heroic adventures since the war was commenced."

According to NOAA, it believes it found the vessel between Charleston and Georgetown, S.C.

## Upcoming Events

**June 6-8:** The First Battle of Kinston Battlefield in Kinston, N.C., will host a living history event. Infantry, cavalry, artillery demonstrations and a range of exhibits. See <http://directories.kinstonchamber.com/events/details/civil-war-living-history-182944> or call Jane Phillips at (252) 468-1424 for more information.

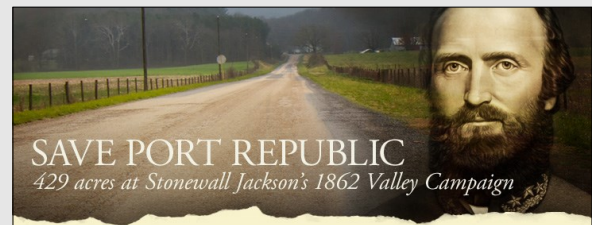
**June 12:** The Gov. Vance Birthplace in Weaverville, N.C., will host a program involving the state's original copy of the 13th Amendment. Lectures, music. Free. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Go to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/vance> or call (828) 645-6706 for details.

**June 14:** SCV Camp No. 1446 (Smyrna, Ga.), will hold memorial services for Raleigh-born Confederate Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk on the 150th anniversary of his death by artillery fire. Free. 10 a.m. at Pine Mountain in Cobb County, Ga., and 6 p.m. at St. Hilda's Anglican Catholic Church in Atlanta. For details, e-mail Melvin Dishong at [K4JFF@aol.com](mailto:K4JFF@aol.com) or call him at (770) 427-7923.

**June 21-22:** Bennett Place in Durham, N.C., will host a living history event including the firing of weapons and camp life. Free. Sat., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sun., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visit <http://www.bennettplacehistoricsite.com/special-events> or call (919) 383-4345 for more.

## Preservation News

The Civil War Trust is seeking to save important acreage at the Port Republic battlefield in Virginia, site of the final battle in Stonewall Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign.



The land targeted for preservation is 429 acres on both sides of Lewiston Lane, the scene of the most intense infantry fighting of the battle.

The Trust's goal in this campaign is to raise \$270,000. Donations are matched five to one.

For details, see <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/portrepublic/port-republic-2014>.

# News of the RCWRT



## Upcoming RCWRT Meetings

2014

**July:** Keith Hardison, Jefferson Davis

**August:** Stephen Davis, The Atlanta Campaign

**September:** Margaret Humphreys, Civil War medicine

**October:** Marvin Nicholson, African-American experience

**November:** Noah Trudeau, Sherman's March

**December:** Holiday party at the Capitol

2015

**January:** annual Ed Bearss event

**February:** Brenda McKean, The Home Front

**March:** Patrick Schroeder, Appomattox

**April:** Mark Bradley, End of the Civil War in NC

**May:** Lee Craig, Economics of the American Civil War

**June:** Will Hansen, CW Materials at Duke's Library

## Contact Your Lawmakers!

The RCWRT has been informed that the FY 2014/15 budget plan proposed by the governor will virtually eliminate the Historical Publications Section of the North Carolina Office of Archives and History, a unit that publishes many books about the Civil War as it affected North Carolina. It is unlikely that the last four volumes of the invaluable publication *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865: A Roster* will be completed if the budget, as proposed by the governor, is adopted. Please consider contacting your state representative and senator, as the Legislature considers the appropriations bill.

## Officer, Board Nominations Sought

RCWRT President Ted Kunstling is seeking volunteers and nominations for officers and other board members who will serve two-year terms beginning in September. Elections will be held during the Round Table's annual business meeting that will take place in August prior to the presentation by our speaker. Interested in serving? Would you like to nominate someone else? Call Ted at (919) 787-5282 or email him at [tkunstling@aol.com](mailto:tkunstling@aol.com).



## The Knapsack

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### RCWRT Score Card

Members	120
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The Raleigh Civil War Round Table was formed on March 12, 2001 and is a 501(c)(3) "tax exempt organization." We meet on the second Monday of most months at 7:00 pm, at the N.C. Museum of History, (5 Edenton St. across from the State Capitol). Members and guests are encouraged to meet for supper at K&W Cafeteria (511 Woodburn Rd, Cameron Village) at 5:15; and for further discussion at The Mellow Mushroom (Glenwood Avenue & Peace Street) after the meeting. Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$10 for teachers. Students are free. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20.