

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

November 8, 2010
Our 117th Meeting



Volume 10
Number 11

Charles Hawks Will Discuss Confederate Naval Warfare at November 8 Meeting

Charles Hawks was born (and lived) in Raleigh most of his life. He graduated from Needham B. Broughton High School and received his B.S. from High Point College in Business Administration.

Charles retired from the Naval Reserve in 1989 as a Commander (Intelligence), and retired from the N.C. Department of Revenue in 2000. Charles became interested in the Civil War when he learned that he had two ancestors who fought for the Confederacy ~ one was mortally wounded and one lost his arm.

He attended the first meeting of the RCWRT in 2001 and has missed only 2 or 3 meetings since then. He served as *The Knapsack* editor for almost eight years and was honored by the RCWRT with the T. Harry Gatton award in 2010.

During the 1990's, Charles was a leader in two Confederate heritage organizations and was elected NC Division Commander in 2000. He was elected Army of Northern Virginia Commander (with a seat on the national executive council) in 2002. He has served since 2003 as the editor of the NC MOSB newsletter, which was honored as most outstanding state newsletter in 2006.



Charles has studied naval warfare during the Civil War for over 20 years and has almost 100 books on the subject.

His most memorable Civil War experiences include dedicating the grave marker for his Confederate ancestor, viewing the *H.L. Hunley* (with the crew members still entombed), and the burial of her crew two years later.

His other interests include "the tall (sailing) ships," lighthouses, military history, bird-watching, and "rookie" (minor) league baseball. In 2007, he moved to Burlington to be closer to his daughter and three grandchildren.

~ Confederate Naval Warfare ~

Pirates & Privateers
Ironclads & Tinclads
Cottonclads & Unclads
International & Maritime Laws
Davids & Goliath
Old Buck & Old Beeswax
"Going South"
Blockades & Blockade Runners
Powder Monkeys & Mosquito Fleets
Submarines & Secret Missions
Torpedoes & "Coal Mines"
and more.

Learn about these subjects during a 100+ slide presentation by Charles Hawks (retired USNR Commander) at our November 8 meeting.

The Battle of Roanoke Island: The Story of One Wounded Man

The battle of Roanoke Island, which took place off the North Carolina coast in February 1862, was the first engagement fought by the men of the 9th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry. The experience would christen the men with a new regimental nickname.

“The rebels have given the title of Jersey Muskrats to our boys, who waded waist-deep in mud and water,” a participant attested.



One of the men wounded in the battle was Private Ferdinand Disbrow of Company B. His name appears on a casualty list included in a Feb. 21, 1862 article in the *New York Times* reporting on the battle of Roanoke. Disbrow is listed as wounded, “shot in the left arm.”

Medical treatment of Disbrow’s injury is described in the diary of Dr. James Bryan, a brigade surgeon attached to the Burnside Expedition:

“**March 15th** ... Amputated, this day, the left arm of Ferdinand Disbrow, of the 9th New Jersey, in the upper third of the humerus. This was a case of compound and comminuted fracture of the lower portion of this bone, caused by a Minie ball passing through the arm.

The wound was received at the battle of Roanoke, and consequently, this was a secondary amputation, which, as far as my experience goes, both on the Potomac and here, is often unfortunate in its results.

The operation in this case was by double flap, which produced a very well-proportioned stump, without any puckering of the tissues. There was trouble in arresting the haemorrhage from the various muscular arterioles. The haemorrhage still continued after the ligation of these vessels, proceeding as we found, from the cavity of the bone. It was finally arrested by plugging the medullary canal with a piece of sponge, to which a thread had been tied.

The latter was allowed to hang out of the wound. I observed, on sawing off the bone, that a considerable oozing of pus took place from the cavity of the bone; although the latter appeared healthy, and the point of amputation was at least two and a half inches above the fracture. Chloroform was used during the operation...

I was assisted in the above operation by Drs. Squiers, Humphreys, White, Cooper, Smith and Cadet Applegate.

Sunday, 16th [March] ... Dr. Squiers reports that Disbrow is well, with the exception of slight bleeding, which was arrested by taking up a small artery.

Monday, 17th [March] ... Visited Camp Reno, and went through the hospitals in consultation with Dr. S. [Squiers]; found Disbrow doing tolerably well...

Wednesday, 19th [March] – The case of the amputation of the arm (F. Disbrow) terminated in the death of the patient yesterday. The rapid prostration of the last twenty-four hours of his life, was possibly due to pyaemia.”

~o~

Bryan’s diagnosis of the cause of death is now known as blood poisoning, or septicemia per the medical dictionary.

Ferdinand Disbrow enlisted at the age of 33 in the 9th New Jersey on Oct. 16, 1861, for a 3-year term. He is buried in the New Bern National Cemetery, N.C., Section 12, Grave 13. At his family plot in East Brunswick, N.J., there also is a grave marker for Disbrow.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The preceding article was excerpted and edited from a longer piece submitted to *The Knapsack* by Gilbert Skip Riddle. Skip spoke to the RCWRT in July about the wounded and slain of the Battle of New Bern.



Gilbert Skip Riddle

Gatton Award Nominations Sought

Each year, the Raleigh Civil War Round Table honors an individual who has distinguished themselves through their work or efforts related to the study of the Civil War through its T. Harry Gatton Award.

The person may be an author, scholar, artist, historian, speaker, or anyone whom the RCWRT's Board of Directors believes should receive this honor.

Prior winners are:

2008: Ed Bearss

2009: Nora Brooks

2010: Charles Hawks

Members wishing to nominate someone for this honor should send the name and an explanation of why they believe that person should be considered to President Steve Savia at ssavia@nc.rr.com.

The deadline for nominations is November 30. The award will be presented at our Ed Bearss event in January 2011.

Upcoming Events

November 5, 6: Annual reenactment at Fort Branch, just south of Hamilton, N.C. Living history demonstration and encampments. For details, see <http://www.fortbranchcivilwarsite.com>.

November 6: A reenactment of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and campaigning for the 1860 presidential election along with an antebellum luncheon are being held in Clarksville, Tenn. For more information about the event, visit <http://www.clarksvilleonline.com/2010/10/24/local-groups-to-hold-civil-war-events>.

November 11: The National Civil War Chaplains Museum presents *Far From Fields of Fire and Glory: Letters and Music of the Civil War* at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. For more information about the museum, see <http://www.chaplainsmuseum.org>.

December 11: The Olde South Ball in Greenville, S.C., grand ballroom of the Marriott. Event includes display of a rare, original lithograph of the state's Ordinance of Secession, formal supper, a dance, silent charity auction, and door prizes. For details, see <http://www.oldsouthball.com>.

Union Graves Marked

On Oct. 2, five Union soldiers were honored with official federal grave markers in south-central North Carolina, more than 145 years after their deaths.

The five soldiers were killed by on March 7, 1865, while on a foraging mission in Richmond County. Local Confederate home guard are believed to have ambushed the Federal troops.

Originally, their places of burial were marked with large rocks until the local historical society worked to provide the fallen soldiers with the new markers, which now identify the men.

The new markers memorialize Privates Henry L. Sennett, 24, Calvin Simpson, 24, and David Woods, members of the 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry and Cpt. Reed Alcorn, 21, and Pvt. Matthew Ross, 20, members of the 8th Indiana Cavalry.

Preservation News

The Civil War Preservation Trust recently has launched a campaign aimed at saving another 240 acres in four different parcels at Bentonville.

The purchase of the targeted property would bring the total acres saved at this important North Carolina battlefield to 1,142.

The CWPT's goal in this campaign is to raise \$1.1 million.



For more information on the Bentonville preservation effort, visit <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/bentonville/bentonville10>.

News of the RCWRT



Have You Renewed?

As of mid-October, only about half of our members have sent in their dues and renewed. Your dues pay rent at the museum and cover speaker expenses, as well as support our preservation and education missions. If you have not paid your dues for the upcoming year, please send them (\$30, individual or family) to:

David June, Treasurer
3912 White Chapel Way
Raleigh, NC 27615

West Coast Connections

One of our long-time members, Leigh Vaughan, recently represented the Raleigh Civil War Round Table on the West Coast.

Leigh and his wife (member Sandy), were visiting their newest grandchild in September and he attended the monthly meeting of the Peninsula Civil War Round Table. The program was given by Dr. Donald J. Hayden, president of the Sacramento Civil War Roundtable, and titled "Those Amazing MacArthurs," a presentation on his family heritage which included Arthur MacArthur, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his acts of valor during the Battle of Missionary Ridge, and Douglas MacArthur of World War II and Korean War fame.

More information on the Peninsula Civil War Round Table is available at <http://www.peninsulacivilwarroundtable.org>.

Read A Good Book?

If you have read a book related to the Civil War period that you have enjoyed and would like to recommend to members, please submit a brief review to the editor.

RCWRT Score Card	
Total Membership	153
October 2010 Attendance	
Supper	15
Meeting	45
Fellowship	10



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before each meeting.
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**Readers are encouraged to submit
photos, events, & articles for publication to
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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 p.m., at the NC History Museum, (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) immediately after the meeting. Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$15 for students. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20.