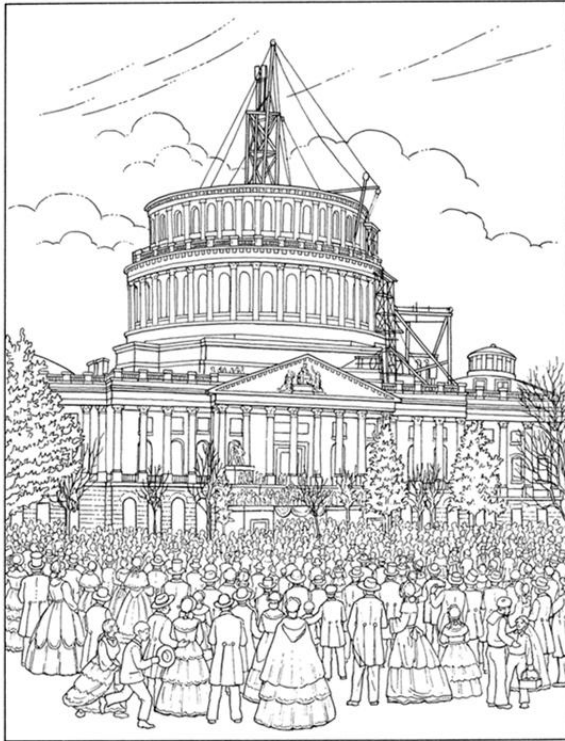


Cape May County Civil War Round Table



When Lincoln was inaugurated (on March 4, 1861), the Capitol was not yet complete. The dome, so familiar to us today, was not finished until 1863.

August 2018 Newsletter

Meeting Dates

Meetings are at 7pm at the Cape May County Museum and Historical Society, in the Military Room in the old barn.

16 August: Herb Kaufman on *Civil War Medicine*, including samples of Victorian medical equipment. **Refreshments:** Mike & Barbara Golla

20 September: Bob Heinly on Col Henry Sawyer; **Refreshments:** Eddie Vargo

18 October: Jake Miller, Park Historian at Fort Delaware, on the uses of the Fort during the war. **Refreshments:** Mimi Wheaton

15 November: OPEN

NOTE: My apologies for the newsletter being MIA these past months, but yours truly has had severe medical issues and the chemotherapy has really knocked me on my backside since October. I'm now starting to feel better as they had to change my chemotherapy meds. **PLEASE folks, send me articles, book reviews, etc to help me fill up the newsletter!**

Round Table Officers

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Minutes for the July Meeting

- 1) Since Pat Munson-Siter has been diligently doing the newsletter this year but has been unable to attend the meetings because of illness it was proposed and agreed by the members to waive her membership dues this year. Pat, thanks for all that you do. With that being said we now have 22 official members of the CW round table this year.
- 2) Donna Matalucci reminded everybody of the upcoming shipwreck exhibit at the museum and the art auction which will be held on Saturday, September 8.
- 3) After the business meeting, Dr. Robert Heinly - a member of our CW round table and representing the Mid Atlantic Center for Arts and Humanities (MAC) - presented an overview of battles, legislation and notable activities of the Civil War from 1861 to 1865. He explained the strengths and weaknesses and the goals of the north and the south and how they changed over the course of the war. He reviewed some of the key battles and pointed out the virtues and shortcomings of the various generals involved. He also spoke about President Lincoln and discussed some of the qualities of good and bad presidents over the history of the United States. Thanks Bob.

Respectfully submitted, John Herr, Treasurer



NIDAR Pass Committee



Civil War Related Events September 2018

1 VA Campfire program/living history, “A Sense of History,” meets at the Fredericksburg Battlefield visitor center, 1013 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg. 7:30 pm. Free. nps.gov/frsp

1-2 VA Living history at Marye’s Heights on the Fredericksburg battlefield. Camps open 9 am-5 pm Saturday, 9 am-3 pm Sunday. Firing demos 11 am, 2 pm and 4 pm Saturday; 11 am and 2 pm Sunday. Campfire program 7:30 pm Saturday. Free. www.nps.gov/frsp

1-2 PA Living history, “National Eastern Federal School of the Soldier, Encampment,” at Old Bedford Village, 220 Sawblade Road, Bedford. Camps, demonstrations music and more. Details: johnzaharias.com/old-bedford-village

8 VA Candlelight tour of Ben Lomond Historic Site, 1861 Confederate hospital, 10321 Sudley Manor Drive, Manassas. 8-9 pm. \$10. 703-367-7872.

8 MD Bus tour, “John Wilkes Booth Escape Route,” sponsored by sponsored by the Surratt House Museum in Clinton. 7 am-7 pm. \$85. surrattmuseum.org

8 MD Living history, “Artillery Day,” at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick. Camp and demonstrations 9 am-3 pm. Free. nps.gov/mono

8-9 VA Living history, “Yankees in Falmouth,” includes Civil War military, photography, music, talks and more at several Stafford County sites including the Moncure Conway House, 303 King St, Falmouth. Trolley connections to other Stafford County Civil War parks. Details, directions: tourstaffordva.com/yankees-in-falmouth

9 MD Ranger program, “Mystery & Myths of Lee’s Lost Orders,” at the Monocacy National Battlefield in

Frederick. 10 am, noon and 3 pm. Free. nps.gov/mono

12 VA Living history, Gen. D.H. Hill as post-war editor of *The Land We Love* magazine, at the Handley Library, 100 Picadilly St, Winchester. 6:30 pm. Free. facebook.com/events/1741222635954593

14 VA Car-caravan tour, “Retreat and Redemption: the Union 19th Corps at Cedar Creek.” Meets at the NPS Contact Station, 7712 Main St, Middletown. 5-7 pm. Free.

15 VA Reenactment, “Waynesboro at War,” at Coyner Springs Park in Waynesboro. Camps with talks, demonstrations and ball game open 9 am-5 pm Saturday, 9 am-4 pm Sunday. Dance 7-9 pm Saturday. Battles 2 pm each day. \$5/day pass (extra for dance). waynesboroatwar.com

15 VA Living history, “Harvest Day,” at Rural Plains, historic house on the Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield, 7273 Sudley Road, Mechanicsville. Civilian and military camps and demonstrations. 10 am-4 pm. Free. nps.gov/rich

15 MD Bus tour, “John Wilkes Booth Escape Route,” sponsored by sponsored by the Surratt House Museum in Clinton. 7 am-7 pm. \$85. surrattmuseum.org

15-16 MD Anniversary activities at the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Living history and ranger-led hikes and talks. Free with park admission. Details: nps.gov/ant

21 VA Car-caravan tour, “The Fall of Gibraltar”: The Battle of Fisher’s Hill.” 10 am-noon. Free. Registration, exact tour location: 540-740-4545 or shenandoahatwar.org

22 PA Program and tour, “The Rebel Attack that Almost Broke the Back of the Union Army,” at the Gettysburg NMP. Sponsored by the Gettysburg Foundation. 9 am-4 pm. \$110. Register: gettysburgfoundation.org

22 DC/MD Bus tour, “The Battle of Antietam,” with Ed Bearss. Smithsonian tour leaves from 550 C

St SW, Washington. 8 am-7 pm. \$195.
smithsonianassociates.org (click Civil War).

22 VA Walking tour, Civil War tour of Stephens City (Newtown). Begins at the Newtown History Center, 5408 Main St, Stephens City. 10:30 am. \$5. newtownhistorycenter.org/events

22 VA Living history, artillery and infantry camps and demonstrations at the Manassas National Battlefield Park. 11 am-3 pm. Free. nps.gov/mana

22 VA Walking tour of Fort Huger, a Confederate fort on the James River, 15080 Talcott Terrace, near Smithfield. 10 am. historicisleofwight.com

22 VA Walking tour, "Battle of Smithfield," begins at the Isle of Wight Museum, 103 Main St, Smithfield. 2 pm. historicisleofwight.com

22 VA Boat tour, "Potomac Blockade," cruise the sites of the early-war Confederate blockade of Washington DC. Begins at Leesylvania State Park, 2002 Daniel K. Ludwig Drive, Woodbridge. 10 am-1 pm. \$45. More info, reservations: 703-792-5618.

22 MD Historic house tours at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick. Rare view of the Best (10 am), Worthington (12:30 pm) and Thomas (3 pm) houses on the battlefield. Free. Space limited. Reservations begin July 21. Call 301-662-3515. Details: nps.gov/mono

22 MD Bus tour, "John Wilkes Booth Escape Route," sponsored by the Surratt House Museum in Clinton. 7 am-7 pm. \$85. surrattmuseum.org

22-23 MD Living history, "Aftermath of Battle," at the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Includes wet plate photography demos and Sanitary Commission camp. Free with park admission. nps.gov/anti

22-23 MD Living history, "Civil War Days," at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore. Military and civilian living history and exhibits. 10 am-4 pm Saturday, 11 am-4 pm Sunday. Free with museum admission. borail.org

28 VA Car-caravan tour, "Medal of Honor Recipients at Cedar Creek." Meets at the NPS Contact Station, 7712 Main St, Middletown. 5-7 pm. Free. nps.gov/cebe

29 VA Anniversary bicycle tours of the Fort Harrison Battlefield, part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park. 8 am and 2 pm. Free. nps.gov/rich

29-30 PA Reenactment at the Colonial Plantation at Ridley Creek, 3900 N Sandy Flash Drive, Newtown Square. Camps and demonstrations with battles at noon and 4 pm Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. \$12/adult. colonialplantation.org

30 VA Living history, artillery demonstrations, at the Petersburg National Battlefield. 1-4 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete



**Book Review: "Grant" by Ron Chernow;
Reviewed by John Herr**

I just finished reading "Grant" by Ron Chernow and I highly recommend it for anyone interested in the Civil War. It is a large book and will require some time to read. But it is worth it. The book is nearly 1000 pages and the large print version numbers over 1300 pages. This is one of the most informative and comprehensive books about the conflict between the north and the south that I have read. It includes a number of personal anecdotes which add to the readability of the book. It is made up of four parts.

The first is Grant's early life; the second is his adult life prior to and during the war; the third is his life after the war prior to, during and after his presidency and the fourth part is his life after his presidency.

The first part of the book explains Grant's turbulent

relationships with his snake-salesman-like and coattail-riding father (Jesse) and his North-hating slave-owning father-in-law (Frederick Dent). You come away with an in-depth understanding of Grant's West Point and army career including his time in and after the Mexican war. However the repetitive references to Grant's rumored drinking problems is over emphasized and his "supposed" drinking binges are mentioned to a fault. It seems that every rumor ever heard about a possible drinking problem is documented. I found this facet of the story overdone. Understanding his relationship with his wife Julia Dent, (including documented correspondence) gives great insight into his personality, motivation and make-up.

The second part of the book covers his life as a mature man explaining his business failures and financial troubles prior to the Civil War. In 1861 he mustered up for the war in St. Louis and was assigned a company of volunteers based on his degree from West Point, his army experience and his political connections. His achievements on the Western front including Fort Donaldson and Vicksburg victories are well documented in this book. The Overland Campaign in Virginia and Appomattox are well known and thoroughly covered in the book. I came away with a much clearer understanding of Grant's close relationships with Sherman, Sheridan and Lincoln during the war. His relationship with both Sherman and Sheridan became much more complicated and were sometimes contentious after the war and throughout Grant's life. These later conflicts are well documented in part three of the book. Grant was a fighter. He was successful because he realized the importance of fighting General Lee and destroying his army rather than fighting for property.

Part three was the most interesting part to me because I was not aware of Grant's efforts and achievements as President. There were many positives during his years in the presidency. But Grant experienced great difficulties while

orchestrating and presiding over "The Reconstruction". He proved to be the friend of the underdog - what today would be considered a liberal. He was a strong advocate of the 13th 14th and 15th amendments (which outlawed slavery and gave citizenship and voting rights to all native born men). He was a strong supporter of the freed southern negroes. Frederick Douglass was a frequent visitor and advisor. He led the fight against the KKK providing federal troops and Justice Department lawyers ultimately arresting and jailing thousands of southern anti-black KKK terrorists. He was also a friend of the Jews including many as prominent members of his administration. In spite of his good intentions his administration was frequently entangled in devastating political battles with the Congress. This undermined his power and influence. The book also explains and gives great insights into the numerous money-making scandals of his administration. Grant was never personally involved in these scandals but was always very slow to criticize those around him who were. He was too naive to recognize bad acts by "his friends". And as more southern states were re-admitted into the union during his tenure his ability to influence Southern behavior became ever more difficult. I came away thinking of Reconstruction as an impossible task. I don't believe any one - even Lincoln could have done a better job than Grant during that period.

Finally part four speaks to the world tour that Grant and his wife Julia took after his presidency. He spent two years visiting many of the civilized nations around the world as a representative of the US. He was the first retired US president to serve such a role. Grant later became bankrupted and developed terminal cancer in his sixties. He decided to write his memoirs with the publishing help of Mark Twain to provide financial security for his wife. He died of throat cancer shortly after completing the memoirs which went on to provide financial security for his family. Grant wrote his now famous memoirs as his last dying effort.

In summary I found this book to be a real page turner. If you want to understand the Civil War era including pre-and post, this is an excellent book for anyone interested in seriously understanding the War between the States.

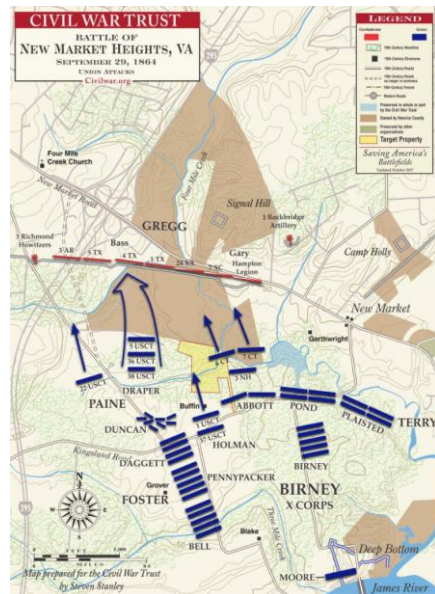


The African American Heroes of New Market Heights = By Peter A. Sicher

At the end of what had been a long and difficult day, Sgt. Maj. Christian A. Fleetwood of the 4th United States Colored Infantry recorded in his diary that he “Charged with the 6th at daylight and got used up...saved colors.” Terse though it may be, Fleetwood’s entry opens a window onto a tale of heroism that is extraordinary, even by the standards of the American Civil War.

On Sept. 29, 1864, during the **Battle of New Market Heights** (part of the larger Battle of Chaffin’s Farm) near Richmond, several regiments of **United States Colored Troops** launched an assault on a well-fortified Southern position at the gates of the Confederate capital. Because of this action, 14 black soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military’s highest decoration for acts of valor in combat. These men represent the largest group of African-Americans from a single battle to be so recognized.

They fought in hellish conditions. New Market Heights – a portion of which has been preserved by the Civil War Trust – was defended by one of the most storied units in Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, the Texas Brigade. Formerly commanded by John Bell Hood, the Texans were now led by John Gregg. Joining the Texans was a brigade of dismounted cavalry led by Martin W. Gary which included Hampton’s Legion, another legendary unit. Artillery batteries anchored each end of the Confederate line, exposing the Federal flanks to deadly enfilading fire. The defenders were protected by the trenches from which they fought, plus formidable natural and artificial obstacles, including two lines of abatis, and a swamp through which the Union attackers had to wade while under enemy fire.



The brave black soldiers in blue assigned the task of taking that position were undeterred, successfully carrying the rebel works and opening the way to the capital. Indeed, a Confederate soldier later admitted, “upon 29th September, Richmond came nearer to being captured, and that, too, by negro troops, than it ever did during the whole war.”

This victory came at tremendous cost. The attack on New Market Heights fell primarily on two African-American brigades with a combined strength of just over 2,000 men. When the smoke cleared, there were well over 800 casualties, including more than 130 dead.

The attackers at New Market Heights were remarkable individuals, none more so than the 14 men awarded the Medal of Honor: William H. Barnes, Powhatan Beaty, James H. Bronson, Christian A. Fleetwood, James Gardiner, James H. Harris, Thomas R. Hawkins, Alfred B.

Hilton, Milton M. Holland, Miles James, Alexander Kelly, Robert A. Pinn, Edward Ratcliff, and Charles Veal.



In this photograph, taken in 1865, Christian Fleetwood (fourth from the right) stands alongside the officers of the 4th USCT. Fleetwood can be seen wearing his Medal of Honor. Library of Congress

The stories of Fleetwood, James, and Beaty illustrate just how impressive these men were.

A free African-American from Baltimore, Christian Fleetwood helped found one of the first black-owned newspapers in the South before enlisting in the 4th USCT in 1863. By the time of the New Market Heights assault, he had been promoted to sergeant major. During the combat, Fleetwood witnessed his regiment's flag bearer go down. Rushing forward, he seized the national colors, carrying them throughout the rest of the fight and somehow surviving what he later described as "a deadly hailstorm of bullets, sweeping men down as hailstones sweep the leaves from the trees." Several months later, the white officers of Fleetwood's regiment organized a petition calling for him to receive an officer's commission, stating "they would gladly welcome him as one of themselves." The War Department denied the request. After the war, Fleetwood continued to serve the public, working in several government positions and commanding a battalion in the D.C. National Guard.

Born enslaved in Virginia, Miles James was a corporal in the 36th USCT when he fought at New Market Heights. His heroism in battle is described by his Medal of Honor citation: "Having had his arm mutilated, making immediate amputation necessary, loaded and discharged his piece with one hand and urged his men forward; this within 30 yards of the enemy's works." After the amputation, James requested permission to stay in the

army. His commanding officer supported the request, writing, "He is one of the bravest men I ever saw. . . He is worth more with his single arm, than a half dozen ordinary men."



Powhatan Beaty, pictured wearing his Medal of Honor. Library of Congress

Like Miles James, Powhatan Beaty was born into slavery in Virginia. A sergeant in the 5th USCT, Beaty played a critical role in the Union's victory at the Battle of Chaffin's Farm. When every officer in his company was killed or wounded, Beaty took command. Keeping his men organized in the face of heavy fire, Beaty led them forward in an attack that broke the Confederate line. After the war, he became a prominent Shakespearean actor, performing across the nation to rave reviews. A man of many talents, he also wrote a play that focused on the transition from slavery to freedom. In the early 21st century, a highway bridge near Richmond was named in Beaty's honor.

The attackers at New Market Heights punched a hole in the Confederate defenses around Richmond. That the rest of the Union army was unable to exploit this opening takes nothing away from their achievement. Thomas Morris Chester, then the only black correspondent for a major daily newspaper, declared that the victorious division had "covered itself with glory" and predicted that it had "wiped out effectually the imputation against the fighting qualities of the colored troops."

The 2nd U.S. Cavalry

By **Daniel T. Davis**

In March 1833, with the onset of Westward Expansion, President **Andrew Jackson** authorized the formation of a regiment of **United States Dragoons**. Such mounted units, which could assume the dual role of cavalry and infantry, had served in the American Revolution and in the Nation's early conflicts. The Dragoons soon proved to be an invaluable asset on the Great Plains and due to an ongoing war with the Seminoles, Congress authorized the

creation of another regiment on May 23, 1836. This new unit was designated the 2nd U.S. Dragoons.

For the next several years, the Second navigated the Florida swamps in operations against their fierce enemy. In the fall of 1842, the regiment transferred to posts in Louisiana and Arkansas. Under the direction of Capt. **William J. Hardee**, a future Confederate general, the regiment refined its skills on the drill field in preparation for its next major assignment. It came in the spring of 1846.

As part of Gen. Zachary Taylor's army, the regiment marched to Texas and crossed the Rio Grande River. On May 9 at Resaca de la Palma, Capt. Charles May's squadron launched a mounted assault against an enemy artillery position. May's charge forced the withdrawal of the guns and captured a Mexican general. The regiment eventually transferred to Gen. **Winfield Scott**'s army and fought in the Mexico City Campaign.

At the conclusion of the Mexican War, the Dragoons were assigned to posts in the Southwest, Texas and Kansas. The regiment participated in several expeditions against various American Indian tribes. In October, 1857, the unit was assigned to Col. **Albert Sidney Johnston**'s force that was sent to Utah to engage the Mormons. Johnston, who would soon become a Confederate army commander and fall at **Shiloh**, led a grueling but bloodless march to Salt Lake City.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, the bulk of the regiment transferred east. On August 3, 1861, the Dragoons were re-designated the 2nd United States Cavalry. Brigaded with other Regular cavalry regiments and at times volunteers, the regiment fought in the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac.



John Buford (Library of Congress)

One of the Second's hardest engagements came at **Brandy Station** on June 9, 1863. That morning, General **Alfred Pleasonton**, who as a lieutenant participated in May's charge at Resaca de la Palma, directed his cavalry corps across the Rappahannock to engage Confederate cavalry under Maj. Gen. **Jeb Stuart** near Culpeper Court House. As part of General **John Buford**'s command and under the direction of Capt. **Wesley Merritt**, the 2nd U.S. splashed across Beverly Ford in the opening phase of the engagement. Like Pleasonton, Buford was also an old Second Dragoon and had served as the regiment's quartermaster on the Mormon Expedition. Buford moved to high ground overlooking the ford on the farm of Richard Cunningham. For much of the morning and afternoon, Merritt and his troopers engaged General **W.H.F. "Rooney" Lee**'s brigade for control of a stonewall which separated Cunningham's property and that of Dr. Daniel Green. When Lee was forced to withdraw due to Union threat in the Confederate rear, the regiment, along with the Reserve Brigade followed and engaged the enemy horsemen along Yew Ridge. During the action, Merritt personal engaged in a duel with Lee. After fourteen hours of fighting, Pleasonton elected to withdraw back across the Rappahannock. **The Civil War Trust has preserved over 2,100 acres at Brandy Station.**



Wesley Merritt's duel at Brandy Station.

When the Civil War came to an end, the regiment was dispersed to different posts throughout the West. On December 21, 1866, 27 men from Company C perished in the "Fetterman Massacre" near Fort Phil Kearny in Wyoming Territory. In the spring of 1869, three companies were sent to Montana. They would remain there for the next fifteen years and become known as the "Montana Battalion".

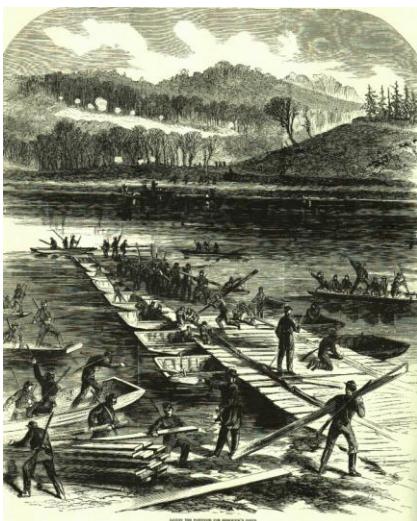
These troopers, along with other companies from the regiment fought in the Great Sioux War. Part of the Second accompanied Col. Joseph Reynolds' Powder River Expedition in March, 1876, and were at the Rosebud. In the aftermath of the Little Bighorn disaster, the troopers assisted in evacuating the wounded of the 7th U.S. Cavalry from the battlefield. Lieutenant Charles Roe and

Company C returned to the Little Bighorn in the summer of 1881. Roe and his men erected the monument which stands today on Last Stand Hill to the Seventh Cavalry and interred remains of the dead around its base. In May, 1877, the Second participated in the last battle of the conflict against the Miniconjou chief Lame Deer. Several months later, the 2nd U.S. fought against the Nez Perce at Camas Prairie and Bear Paw Mountain. In December 1885, one squadron was transferred to Arizona to engage Apaches led by Geronimo.

During the Spanish-American War, the Second was sent to Cuba and fought in the Santiago Campaign. In January, 1905, the regiment was dispatched to and fought in the Philippines. World War I marked the last time the regiment would use horses in combat. The regiment fought in the offensives of Aisne-Marne, Oisne-Aisne, at Saint Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne.

At the end of the Great War, the regiment was posted to Fort Riley, Kansas. Five months after entrance into World War II, it was re-designated the Second Armored Regiment. The regiment served under George S. Patton in Europe, and fought again in Philippines. In 1948, the regiment was re-designated again as the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Rather than going to Korea, the unit remained in Europe throughout the Cold War. The regiment fought in Operation Desert Storm and

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Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Although divided and combined to form other units throughout its history, the descendants of the Second Dragoons exist today as the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. The words “Toujours Prêt”, Always Ready, are emblazoned on their coat of arms and those who serve faithfully adhere to Charles May’s orders to his men at Resaca de la Palma “Remember your regiment and follow your officers.”

Daniel T. Davis

Daniel T. Davis is a Co-Managing Editor of Emerging Civil War and co-author of six books in Savas Beatie’s Emerging Civil War Series. He has also authored or co-authored articles in *Blue & Gray Magazine*, *Civil War Times* and *Hallowed Ground*.

