



Sanitary Fair, Philadelphia

Cape May County Civil War Round Table Newsletter = July 2018

Meeting Dates

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

19 July: Bob Heinly: *Battles & Major Events of the Civil War*.
Refreshments: John Herr

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!**

Pat Munson-Siter

Round Table Officers

President: Andy Lolli
17 Delaware Ave, Del Haven, NJ 08251
609-889-0061
Email: andy.lolli@verizon.net

Vice President: Lou Bishop Jr.
21 Schoolhouse Ln, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
609-463-9277 or 741-5438
southwilriseagain@aol.com

Secretary: Pat Munson-Siter
42 Franklin Ave., Villas, NJ 08251-2407
609-287-5097
patms1766@outlook.com

Treasurer: John Herr
241 80th St., Avalon, NJ 08202
609-636-2551
avalonjohn@aol.com



Civil War Events in August

1861

- 10 – Battle of Wilson’s Creek (MO)
- 11 – Union Soldiers Occupy Hatteras Island (NC)

1862

- 9 – Battle of Cedar Island (VA)
- 29 – 30 – Second Battle of Manassas/Bull Run (VA)

1863

- 21 – Burning of Lawrence (KS) by Quantrill

1864

- 5 – Battle of Mobile Bay (AL)

Civil War Re-enactments, Lectures, other Events in August 2017

1 **MD** Lecture, “The Last Army of the Republic: the Myth of the Unused Reserves at the Battle of Antietam,” at the Jacob Rohrbach Inn, 138 W Main St, Sharpsburg. 7 pm. Free. jacob-rohrbach-inn.com/blog/2018/01/2018-civil-war-lecture-series

3 **VA** Ranger program, “Hartwood Church Inside and Out,” meets at the church, 50 Hartwood Road, north of Fredericksburg. nps.gov/frsp

4 **PA** Free admission to the Cyclorama, film and museum at the Gettysburg NMP on Ford Family Day, plus hike, music and more. 8 am-6 pm. cart.gettysburgfoundation.org/single/EventDetail.aspx?p=2613

4 PA Special program, “An Evening with the Painting,” special tour of the Gettysburg Cyclorama at the Gettysburg NMP. 6 pm. \$20/adult.

Register: gettysburgfoundation.org

4 VA Campfire program, “No One Path to Freedom,” at Chatham Plantation, 120 Chatham Lane, across the river from downtown Fredericksburg. 8 pm. Free.

nps.gov/frsp

4 VA Panel discussion, “From Individuals to Symbols of Memory,” at the White House of the Confederacy in Richmond. 2 pm. \$10. acwm.org

4-5 WV Living history, “Under Fire: Hold the High Ground, 1862,” at Boliver Heights, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Camp 11 am-4 pm. Demonstrations 1, 2 and 3 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/hafe

8 MD Lecture, “Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney: Beyond Dred Scott,” at the Jacob Rohrbach Inn, 138 W Main St, Sharpsburg. 7 pm. Free. jacob-rohrbach-inn.com/blog/2018/01/2018-civil-war-lecture-series

10 VA Walking tour, “Distinguished Gallantry: Medals of Honor at Slaughter Pen Farm,” meets at the Farm, 11190 Tidewater Trail, Fredericksburg. 7 pm. Free. nps.gov/frsp

10 VA Car-caravan tour, “‘Battle and Bushwhackers’: The Page Valley During the Civil War.” 10 am-noon. Free. Registration, exact tour location: 540-740-4545 or shenandoahatwar.org

10-11 PA Gettysburg Music Muster at the Gettysburg NMP. Music throughout the park and in town. Free. nps.gov/gett

11 MD Living history, “Infantry Day,” camp and demonstrations at the Monocacy National Battlefield. Demos at 10 and 11 am; noon; and 1, 2 and 3 pm. Free. nps.gov/mono

11 VA Van tour, “Howlett Line,” begins at Henricus Historical Park, 252 Henricus Park Road, Chester. 9 am-1 pm. \$15. chesterfieldhistory.com/upcoming-events

11 VA Lecture, “The Sloop of War CSS *Alabama* in Combat,” at the Mariners’ Museum in Newport News. 2:30 pm. Free with admission. marinersmuseum.org

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

11 VA Living history, “The Long March North to Gettysburg,” Confederate and Union camps at Mt. Zion Historic Park, 40309 John Mosby Highway, Aldie. 9 am-5 pm. Free. novaparks.com/parks/mt-zion-historic-park

11-12 MD Living history at the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Infantry demos 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm Saturday, 11 am and 1 pm Sunday. Free with park admission. nps.gov/anti

15 MD Lecture, “The Heaviest Blow Yet Given the Confederacy: The Emancipation Proclamation Changes the Civil War,” at the Jacob Rohrbach Inn, 138 W Main St, Sharpsburg. 7 pm. Free. jacob-rohrbach-inn.com/blog/2018/01/2018-civil-war-lecture-series

17 VA Living history and talk, “‘When the conflict is ended mercy again asserts itself’ Treating the Wounded at Cedar Creek,” meets at St. Thomas Church, 7854 Church St, Middletown. 7-9 pm. Free. nps.gov/cebe

18 PA Bus, walking tour, “O.O. Howard and Gettysburg,” at the Gettysburg NMP. Sponsored by the Gettysburg Foundation. 9 am-noon or 1-4 pm. \$40 per session. Register: gettysburgfoundation.org

18 VA Lantern-light, living history walking tour, “Using a County Seat to View the Civil War,” begins 7:30 pm at 32 E Main St, Berryville. \$15/adult. mosbyheritagearea.org

18 VA Bus tour, “Second Manassas,” sites related to the 1862 battle. Leaves from the Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, 10707 General Kirkland Drive, Bristow. 8:30 am-4 pm. \$70. Reservations, more info: 703-366-3049.

18-19 VA Living history, “Technological Innovation,” demonstrations at Pamplin Historical Park near Petersburg. 10:30 am-3 pm. Free with park admission. pamplinpark.org

22 MD Lecture, “Zouaves, the First and the Bravest,” at the Jacob Rohrbach Inn, 138 W Main St, Sharpsburg. 7 pm. Free. jacob-rohrbach-inn.com/blog/2018/01/2018-civil-war-lecture-series

24-26 VA Second battle anniversary programs at the Manassas National Battlefield Park. In-depth walking tours and weekend living history (11 am-5 pm). Free. nps.gov/mana

25 PA Talks, hike, “The African-American History of Monterey Pass,” at the Monterey Pass Battlefield Park, off Route 16 near Blue Ridge Summit. 10 am-4 pm. Free. Details, directions: montereypassbattlefield.org/events

25 DC/VA Bus tour, “Strategic Civil War Crossing of the Upper Potomac,” a Smithsonian tour, leaves from 550 C St SW, Washington. 8:30 am-5:30 pm. \$180. smithsonianassociates.org (click Civil War).

25 VA Bus tour, “The Secret Civil War: Union Spies in Richmond,” hosted by the Richmond National Battlefield Park. 1-4 pm. Free. Registration info: nps.gov/rich

25 VA Car-caravan tour, “Battle of Bull Run Bridge,” sites related to this 1862 prelude to Second Manassas. Begins at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, 10707 General Kirkland Drive, Bristow. 8-11 am. \$20/vehicle.

25-26 MD Living history, camps and demonstrations at the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Artillery demos 11 am and 1 pm Saturday. Artillery and infantry demos 11 am and 1 pm. Sunday. Free with park admission. nps.gov/anti

25-26 VA Anniversary walking tours, “Battle of Kettle Run,” prelude to Second Manassas, at Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park, 10707 General Kirkland Drive, Bristow. 1-4 pm. \$5. 703-366-3049.

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

29 MD Lecture, “Sumner and French at Antietam,” at the Jacob Rohrbach Inn, 138 W Main St, Sharpsburg. 7 pm. Free. jacob-rohrbach-inn.com/blog/2018/01/2018-civil-war-lecture-series

Modern Medicine's Civil War Legacy *Ina Dixon*

During the Civil War, both sides were devastated by battle and disease. Nurses, surgeons, and physicians

rose to the challenge of healing a nation and advanced medicine into the modern age.



*Walt Whitman remarked on the plethora of hospitals around Washington D.C., calling them "grim clusters."
Library of Congress*

From the stench of putrefying flesh wafting through unsanitary and crowded camps to the unglamorous illnesses of syphilis and dysentery, our modern disgust toward Civil War medical practices is generally justified.

However, while “advanced” or “hygienic” may not be terms attributed to medicine in the nineteenth century, modern hospital practices and treatment methods owe much to the legacy of Civil War medicine. Of the approximately 620,000 soldiers who died in the war, two-thirds of these deaths were not the result of enemy fire, but of a force stronger than any army of men: disease. Combating disease as well treating the legions of wounded soldiers pushed Americans to rethink their theories on health and develop efficient practices to care for the sick and wounded.

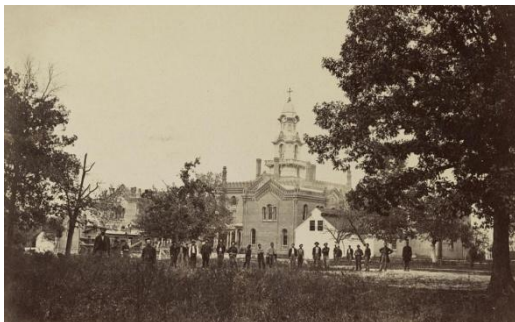
At the beginning of the Civil War, medical equipment and knowledge was hardly up to the challenges posed by the wounds, infections and diseases which plagued millions on both sides. Illnesses like dysentery, typhoid fever, pneumonia, mumps, measles and tuberculosis spread among the poorly sanitized camps, felling men already weakened by fierce fighting and meager diet. Additionally, armies initially struggled to efficiently tend to and transport their wounded, inadvertently sacrificing more lives to mere disorganization.



Wounded soldiers gather outside of a field hospital after Battle of the Wilderness in May of 1864.
Library of Congress

For medical practitioners in the field during the Civil War, germ theory, antiseptic (clean) medical practices, advanced equipment, and organized hospitalization systems were virtually unknown. Medical training was just emerging out of the “heroic era,” a time where physicians advocated bloodletting, purging, blistering (or a combination of all three) to rebalance the humors of the body and remedy the sick. Physicians were also often encouraged to treat diseases like syphilis with mercury, a toxic treatment, to say the least. These aggressive “remedies” of the heroic era of medicine were often worse than patients’ diseases; those who overcame illness during the war owed their recoveries less to the ingenuity of contemporary medicine than to grit and chance. Luck was a rarity in camps where poor sanitation, bad hygiene and diet bred disease, infection, and death.

The wounded and sick suffered from the haphazard hospitalization systems that existed at the start of the Civil War. As battles ended, the wounded were rushed down railroad lines to nearby cities and towns, where doctors and nurses coped with the onslaught of dying men in makeshift hospitals. These hospitals saw a great influx of wounded from both sides and the wounded and dying filled the available facilities to the brim. The Fairfax Seminary, for example, opened its doors twenty years prior to the war with only fourteen students, but it housed an overwhelming 1,700 sick and wounded soldiers during the course of the war.



Fairfax Seminary, in Alexandria, Virginia served as a makeshift hospital for the Army of the Potomac.
Library of Congress

On his many tours of these improvised hospitals, the great American poet and Civil War nurse Walt Whitman noted in his Memoranda during the War the disorderly death and waste of early Civil War medicine. At the camp hospital of the Army of the Potomac in Falmouth, Virginia in 1862, Whitman saw “a heap of amputated feet, legs, arms, hands, &c, a full load for a one-horse cart” and “several dead bodies” lying near. Of the “hospital” itself, which was a brick mansion before the battle of Fredericksburg changed its use, Whitman observed that it was “quite crowded, upstairs and down, everything impromptu, no system, all bad enough, but I have no doubt the best that can be done; all the wounds pretty bad, some frightful, the men in their old clothes, unclean and bloody.” Of the division hospitals, Whitman noted that these were “merely tents, and sometimes very poor ones, the wounded lying on the ground, lucky if their blankets are spread on layers of pine or hemlock twigs or small leaves.”

However, the heavy and constant demands of the sick and wounded sped up the technological progression of medicine, wrenching American medical practices into the light of modernity. Field and pavilion hospitals replaced makeshift ones and efficient hospitalization systems encouraged the accumulation of medical records and reports, which slowed bad practices as accessible knowledge spread the use of beneficial treatments.



A medical kit during the Civil War, with scissors, gauze and needles.
Tria Giovan/CORBIS

Several key figures played a role in the progression of medicine at this time. Jonathan Letterman, the Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac, brought “order

and efficiency in to the Medical Service” with a regulated ambulance system and evacuation plans for the wounded. As surgeon general of the Union army, William A. Hammond standardized, organized and designed new hospital layouts and inspection systems and literally wrote the book on hygiene for the army. Clara Barton, well-known humanitarian and founder of the American Red Cross, brought professional efficiency to soldiers in the field, especially at the Battle of Antietam in September of 1862 when she delivered much-needed medical supplies and administered relief and care for the wounded. Disease and illness took a heavy toll on soldiers, but as these historic characters show, every effort was made to prevent death caused by human error and ignorance through the development of organized and more advanced practices.

The sheer quantity of those who suffered from disease and severe wounds during the Civil War forced the army and medical practitioners to develop new therapies, technologies and practices to combat death. Thanks to Hammond’s design of clean, well ventilated and large pavilion-style hospitals, suffering soldiers received care that was efficient and sanitary. In the later years of the war, these hospitals had a previously unheard of 8% mortality rate for their patients.

Though the mortality rate was higher for soldiers wounded on the battlefield, field dressing stations and field hospitals administered care in increasingly advanced ways. Once a soldier was wounded, medical personnel on the battlefield bandaged the soldier as fast they could, and gave him whiskey (to ease the shock) and morphine, if necessary, for pain. If his wounds demanded more attention, he was evacuated via Letterman’s ambulance and stretcher system to a nearby field hospital.



*An ambulance drill at the Army of Potomac Headquarters near Brandy Station, Va., March, 1864.
Library of Congress*

Under Hammond and Letterman’s encouragement of triage organization that is still used today, field hospitals separated wounded soldiers into three categories: mortally wounded, slightly wounded and surgical cases. Most of the amputations performed at field hospitals were indeed horrible scenes, but the surgery itself was not as crude as popular memory makes it out to have been. Anesthetics were readily available to surgeons, who administered chloroform or ether to patients before the procedure. Though gruesome, amputation was a life-saving procedure that swiftly halted the devastating effects of wounds from Minié balls (which, by the way, not many “bit” to fight the pain—the chloroform usually did the trick).

In field hospitals and pavilion-style hospitals, thousands of physicians received experience and training. As doctors and nurses became widely familiar with prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, anesthetics, and best surgical practices, medicine was catapulted into the modern era of quality care. Organized relief agencies like the 1861 United States Sanitary Commission dovetailed doctors’ efforts to save wounded and ill soldiers and set the pattern for future organizations like the American Red Cross, founded in 1881.

Death from wounds and disease was an additional burden of the war that took a toll on the hearts, minds, and bodies of all Americans, but it also sped up the progression of medicine and influenced practices the army and medical practitioners still use today. While the Union certainly had the advantage of better medical supplies and manpower, both Rebels and Federals attempted to combat illness and improve medical care for their soldiers during the war. Many of America’s modern medical accomplishments have their roots in the legacy of America’s defining war.

Georgeanna Woolsey: A Day in the Life of a Northern Nurse

On the Homefront

Georgeanna Woolsey was a young unmarried woman when the Civil War began. Shortly after the start of the war, the Woman’s Central Relief Association (a part of the U.S. Sanitary Commission) organized a volunteer nursing staff for the United States Army. In May 1861 she was one of one hundred women selected to become a volunteer nurse. With no prior medical training, she was sent to New York for, what she called in her

diary, “a month’s seasoning in painful sights and sounds.”

We took off our bonnets and went to work. Such a month as we had of it, walking round from room to room, learning what we could—really learning something in the end, till finally, what with writing down everything we saw, and making elaborate sketches of all kinds of bandages and the ways of applying them, and what with bandaging everybody we met for practice, we at last made our ‘reverses’ without a wrinkle; and at the end of the month were competent to any very small emergency, or very simple fracture.



*Patients in Ward K of Armory Square Hospital in Washington, DC (Library of Congress)
She was assigned to Washington D.C. in July 1861 where, she wrote:*

Miss [Dorothea] Dix received us kindly and gave us a good deal of information about the hospitals, and this morning we went to the Georgetown Hospital to see for ourselves. We were delighted with all the arrangements. Everything was clean and comfortable. We shall go again and take papers and magazines.

Her pleasant early experiences were misleading, however. Later, looking back on her nursing career, she remarked:

No one knows who did not watch the thing from the beginning, how much opposition, how much ill-will, how much unfeeling want of thought, these women nurses endured. Hardly a surgeon whom I can think of received or treated them with even common courtesy. Government had decided that women should be employed, and the Army surgeons—unable, therefore to close the hospitals against them—determined to make

their lives so unbearable that they should be forced in self-defense to leave.



*Nurses and officers of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Fredericksburg, Virginia. (Library of Congress)
She did not leave. As fighting became more intense, a makeshift hospital was set up in the Washington, D.C. patent office (now the National Portrait Gallery) where she continued to work as a nurse. She described her experiences:*

On the stacks of marble slabs...we spread mattresses, and put the sickest men. As the number increased, camp beds were set up between the glass cases in the outer room and we alternated—typhoid fever, cogwheels and patent churns, typhoid fever, balloons and mouse traps...Here for weeks, went on a sort of hospital picnic. We scrambled through with what we had to do...Here for weeks we worked among these men, cooking for them, feeding them, washing them, sliding them along on their tables, while we climbed up on something and made up their beds with brooms, putting the same powders down their throats with the same spoon, all up and down what seemed half a mile of uneven floor; coaxing back to life some of the most unpromising—watching the youngest and best die.

Georgeanna Woolsey lived with her married sister Eliza Woolsey Howland in Washington, D.C. while Eliza's husband, Joseph Howland, was serving in the Union Army of the Potomac. When the Army of the Potomac was ordered to leave the capital, Georgeanna and Eliza wanted to travel with it. They tried several times to get permission but were unsuccessful until the Sanitary Commission gave them positions on the hospital ship Daniel Webster. They sailed after the army in April 1862. She wrote:

Sunday, the first day [on the ship] was gone. As for us, we had spent it sitting on deck, sewing upon a hospital flag fifteen by eight, and singing hymns to take the edge off this secular occupation. It is to be run up at once in case we encounter the Merrimac.

Georgeanna's letters after 1862 were lost to a fire, but it is easy to see how the war had affected her over the course of one year. In May 1862, she wrote:

We are changed by all this contact with terror, else how could I deliberately turn my lantern on his [a wounded soldier's] face and say to the Doctor behind me, "Is that man dead?" and stand coolly, while he listened and examined and pronounced him dead. I could not have quietly said, a year ago, "That will make one more bed, Doctor."

— Source: "Letters of a Family During the War 1861-65," Privately published in 1899 by Georgeanna Woolsey Bacon and Eliza Woolsey Howland.



By the end of the war, newly designed, well-ventilated hospitals decreased the mortality rate of the sick and wounded. Library of Congress

Originally published on October 29, 2013

The Navies of the Civil War

As the Civil War raged on the land, the two national navies—Union and Confederate—created another war on the water. The naval war was one of sudden, spectacular lightning battles as well as continual and fatal vigilance on the coasts, rivers, and seas.

Union President Abraham Lincoln set the Union's first naval goal when he declared a blockade of the Southern coasts. His plan was to cut off Southern trade with the outside world and prevent sale of the Confederacy's major crop, cotton. The task was daunting; the Southern coast measured over 2,500 miles and the Union navy numbered less than 40 usable ships. The Union also needed a "brown water navy" of gunboats to support army campaigns down the Mississippi River and in Northern Virginia.

The Southern states had few resources compared to the North: a handful of shipyards, a small merchant marine, and no navy at all. Yet the Confederates needed a navy to break the Union blockade and to defend the port cities. Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Mallory, scrambled to find ships and even took on an offensive task: attacking Union merchant shipping on the high seas.

The first task for Lincoln's naval secretary, Gideon Welles, was a straightforward, but huge, fill-in-the-blank: acquire enough vessels to make every Southern inlet, port, and bay dangerous for trade. The Northern navy immediately began building dozens of new warships and purchased hundreds of merchant ships to convert into blockaders by adding a few guns. The result was a motley assortment that ranged from old sailing ships to New York harbor ferryboats. Critics called it Welles' "soapbox navy."

The Union's blockading squadrons needed not only ships, but also bases on the Southern coast from which to operate. In 1861 the Union began a series of attacks on port cities like Hatteras, North Carolina and Port Royal, South Carolina along the southeastern seaboard. Poorly defended, they fell to Union gunnery and were seized to use as bases. Though never air-tight, by late 1862 the blockade had become a major impediment to Rebel trade.

With a smaller fleet and fewer shipyards than the North, the Confederates counted on making the ships they had as formidable as possible. They decided to challenge the Union navy with the latest technology: ironclads. Though iron-armored ships had appeared in Europe in the 1850s, Union warships were still built of wood. The first Confederate ironclad began its career as a Union cruiser, the *Merrimack*, captured by the Southerners when they seized Norfolk navy yard in Virginia. The Confederates ripped off nearly everything above the waterline of the ship—which they renamed *Virginia*—and replaced it with a casemate of heavy timbers covered by four inches of iron plating. Though underpowered and crude, as yet there was no match for her in Lincoln's wooden navy.

The Union quickly met this challenge with the ingenuity of inventor John Ericsson. Most of his ironclad—the *Monitor*—was underwater. All that appeared above board was a flat main deck and a circular housing carrying two guns. This "tin can on a raft" was the world's first rotating gun turret, and it was protected by eight inches of iron. *Monitor* met *Virginia* in March 1862 at **Hampton Roads**, Virginia. Their three-hour engagement—often fought at point-blank range—was the world's first battle between ironclad vessels. The engagement itself was a draw but the very existence of *Virginia* deterred Union army operations in the area for some months afterwards. Suddenly the wooden naval vessel—and most of the Union fleet—was obsolete. Shipyards North and South began to turn out ironclads as quickly as possible.



This painting shows how close the two ironclads were during their famous duel. Mariners' Museum

Early 1862 also marked the beginning of the Union campaigns to split the Confederacy apart along the Mississippi River. A fleet of gunboats was built to support Ulysses S. Grant's army as it moved from Illinois down the Mississippi River into the heart of the South. Most of these vessels were little more than flat-bottomed, steam-driven barges with heavy timbered sides; the most powerful, like the *Cairo*, were also iron plated. Grant's army and the brown water navy captured Rebel strongholds such as Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee. At the same time, a squadron in the Gulf of Mexico, under David G. Farragut, boldly took on the defenses of New Orleans, Louisiana, with the intention of moving past the city and northward up the Mississippi River. In April 1862, Farragut's fleet fought past two formidable forts and forced New Orleans to surrender. In July, 1863, after a series of hard-fought campaigns against both Rebel forts and fleets, these two Union forces—one moving south and one moving north—would meet at **Vicksburg**, Mississippi and sever everything west of the River from the rest of the Confederacy.

Cape May County Civil War Round Table
www.cmccwrt.com
c/o

In April 1863, the Union navy turned with force on the Southern port cities when it took on the defenses of Charleston, South Carolina. The Confederates were well prepared—having had two years to position guns, floating obstructions and mines (torpedoes)—and the attack failed. Charleston did not fall until the war was nearly ended. After the debacle at Charleston, two other major port cities were targeted: Mobile, Alabama—the last major port in the Gulf—and Wilmington, North Carolina—the last and most important Atlantic gateway in the Confederacy. Mobile was defended by two large forts but these fell under **Farragut's assault in August 1864**. In January, 1865, after a failed first attempt, the largest Union fleet ever assembled attacked **Fort Fisher**—the key to Wilmington's defense—and the stronghold fell. Its loss deprived Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia of a major supply source and contributed directly to the end of the war.

While the war rumbled along on the home front, the Confederates outfitted a series of commerce raiders, vessels such as *Sumter*, *Alabama*, and *Shenandoah* to attack Union merchant shipping worldwide. These ships were acquired by Confederate agents in Europe and most never entered a Southern port. *Alabama*, under Raphael Semmes, was the most famous. Destroying over 60 ships in a 21-month cruise and sending the Union shipping interests into a frenzy, *Alabama* was finally confronted by the Union cruiser *Kearsarge* off Cherbourg, France in 1864. In one of history's last classic one-on-one sea duels, the famed Confederate raider was sunk by accurate Union gunfire.

Finally, the last official act of the Confederate States of America was a naval one. The Confederate raider *Shenandoah*, far at sea in Pacific waters, only learned of the Civil War's end four months after the Confederate armies surrendered. *Shenandoah* finally lowered her flag in England on November 6, 1865.