

Cape May County Civil War Round Table



May 2019 Newsletter

Meeting Schedule for 2019

Meeting dates for 2019 are as follows:

April 18 = Presentation: Mike Kochan on *The Battle of the Ironclads.*

May 16 = Presentation: Robert Holden will be discussing some of the letters and other correspondence and anecdotes about President Lincoln.

June 20 = Presentation: Don Ernsberger on *Stars and Bars over Philadelphia*

July 18 = Presentation: Hugh Boyle on *Collateral Damage from the Assassination of President Lincoln*

August 15 = Presentation by Andy Waskie as General George Meade.

September 19 = Presentation by Michael Wunsch on *In the gift of the people: Abraham Lincoln, Andrew*

Johnson and the National Union Party Convention, Baltimore, June 7-8, 1864

October 17

November 21

PLEASE, friends, send me articles, book reviews, etc to help me fill up the newsletter!

Round Table Officers

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

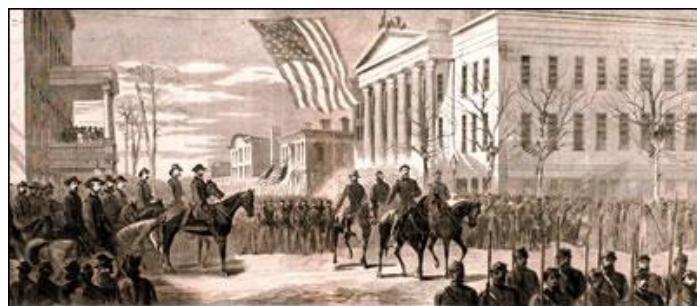
Vice President: Lou Bishop Jr.
21 Schoolhouse Ln, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
609-463-9277 or 741-5438
louiebish22@gmail.com

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

Treasurer: Ed Vargo
25 Sand Castle Drive, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
alwayscloudy1863@gmail.com

DUES ARE DUE!!!

And can be mailed to our treasurer, Eddie Vargo, whose address is above.



Union troops enter Savannah (GA)

President's Update

We have an exciting list of committed speakers scheduled for the next five months. May, June, July, August, and September meetings will all include exceptionally qualified Civil War historians/presenters. Don't miss these opportunities to learn new, exciting and interesting details about the Civil War and related history.

On Thursday, May 16 Robert Holden, a noted local

historian from the Upper Township Historical Society will talk about the early life of Abraham Lincoln, his time as president during the Civil War and his assassination. Bob will share anecdotes about Lincoln's life and his attitude toward slavery. He will also share stories about Lincoln that he has gathered from various authors over the years. In addition to all that Bob will also display a variety of Lincoln memorabilia pieces including a facsimile of a personal letter actually signed by Lincoln. Bob is a retired teacher from the Ocean City school system and has received numerous awards and citations for his work in the field of education.

On Thursday June 20, Don Ernsberger, a nationally recognized author, speaker and Civil War historian will present one of his published books entitled "Stars and Bars over Philadelphia". He will discuss the "what if" scenario of General Robert E Lee's invasion of Philadelphia after his "come from behind" defeat of General Meade's forces at Gettysburg in 1863. Sounds fascinating! This should be an interesting meeting. Don's illustrious professional career included teaching history at the high school and college level and also serving in the US Congress as a deputy chief of staff. Don has spoken to our group in the past and is always entertaining and informative. Don't miss this one.

On Thursday, July 18, Hugh Boyle will present the "collateral damage" of Lincoln's assassination in 1865. Hugh is a Civil War historian and activist and has held leadership roles in numerous Civil War organizations including the GAR and the GAR Museum in Philadelphia. Hugh will discuss the "collateral damage" of Lincoln's assassination. He will speak about the inexplicable "bad luck" that befalls many of Lincoln's family, friends and associates. Hugh will present little known facts and little publicized misfortunes in a very folksy and understandable manner. You will learn of the peculiar afflictions of Lincoln's assassin's relatives in particular. This is an eye-opening and entertaining talk.

On Thursday, August 15 Andy Waskie will present in first person - General George G Meade. Andy will bring General Meade "to life" by describing his thoughts and strategies about his famous Gettysburg battlefield victory. He will discuss his preceding and ensuing career as a union officer in the Civil War. Andy's knowledge of and extensive research of General Meade enables him to bring him back to life. Many Civil War Round Table members have heard Andy speak before and can attest that he never

gets old. Andy is inspirational and informative. We look forward to his talk in August. Andy is an assistant professor at Temple University and is the recipient of numerous medals and awards for his leadership and contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Civil War history.

On Thursday, September 19 Michael Wunsch will speak to our Round Table. Michael currently serves as the corresponding secretary for the General Meade Society and is very active in numerous Civil War organizations and activities. The title of his presentation is "In the gift of the people: Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson and the National Union Party Convention, Baltimore, June 7- 8, 1864". I can't wait for this one.

In other Round Table related activity:

- 1) John Herr, Andy Lolli, Pat Munson-Siter and Lou Bishop attended a grand opening at our meeting location (the Museum of Cape May County), on Wednesday, May 1. A new exhibit was put on display for the first time by the Museum. It is called "Always Ready Always Here". It highlights the history of the United States Coast Guard and it's impact upon Cape May County. This exhibit will be on display for the next several months. Please try to get over to see it - it's worth your while.
- 2) Our monthly meeting was held on April 18. About 20 people were in attendance. Mike Kochan was the guest speaker. Mike spoke about the famous Union ironclad ship - the Monitor. Mike spoke about the background of the developer, John Ericsson and how the ship was designed and approved to fight the Confederate ironclad, the Virginia. He described how the ship was constructed, its voyage south, its battle with the Virginia, sinking and recovery. Fascinating story, enjoyed by all.
- 3) Plans are moving ahead to change our organization from a 501(C)(3) - charitable organization to a 501(C)(7) - social club. This change will save cost and administrative effort and is more appropriate for our type of organization. More at the next meeting.
- 4) Dues - dues - dues. We only have eight paid members to date. Please bring checks or money to the next meeting if you're interested in being a member in good standing. We need this money to pay our speakers.
- 5) We already have commitments from everyone for "after meeting snacks" for every month except August. If you haven't done so already please sign up for August. This is an important part of the socialization of our members. Let's continue to support it.
- 6) I have a two volume set listing all Civil War veterans

buried in New Jersey cemeteries. In (alphabetic) last name order. I will bring it to each meeting this year for anyone who is interested in perusing it.

Respectfully Submitted:

John Herr, President



Important Civil War Events in May

1861

- 3 Battle at Philippi (now WV)
- 10 Battle at Big Bethel (VA)
- 11 Western Virginia counties create separate government

1862

- 1 Lee takes command of Confederate army in Richmond
- 6 Union forces occupy Memphis
- 8 Battle of Cross Keys (VA)
- 9 Battle of Port Republic (VA)
- 26 Battle of Mechanicsville (VA)
- 27 Battle of Gaines' Mill (VA)

29 Battle of Savage's Station (VA)

30 Battle of Glendale (VA)

1863

9 Battle of Brandy Station (VA)

15 Second Battle of Winchester

20 West Virginia admitted to Union as 35th state

1864

1-14 Battle of Cold Harbor (VA)

10 Battle of Brice's Crossroads (MS)

11-12 Battle of Trevilian Station (VA)

15 Initial Union attacks at Petersburg

18 Battle of Lynchburg (VA)

27 Battle of Kennesaw Mountain (GA)

Civil War Related Events = June 2019

1 VA Walking tour, “Fredericksburg’s Battlefield: Prospect Hill,” 3.5-mile “fit history hike” begins at Stop 5 on the Fredericksburg battlefield. 10 am. Free. nps.gov/frsp

1 MD Walking tour, “‘Not Respectable’ — The Enterprising Women of Civil War Frederick,” begins at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick. 3 pm. “Pay what you please” event. Register: civilwarmed.org

1-2 WV Reenactment and other activities, “Blue and Gray Reunion,” in Philippi. Living history camps and demonstrations all weekend. Skirmish 1 pm Saturday, battle reenactment 2 pm Sunday. Details: blueandgrayreunion.org/index.php/schedule

1-2 VA Reenactment, “Fort Pocahontas,” at the historic site just off Route 5 between Richmond and Williamsburg. Camps, demonstrations, tours and more daily. Battles each day. \$10/adult. More info: fortpocahontas.org/reenactment

1-2 PA Reenactment, “Lehigh Valley Civil War Days,” Whitehall Parkway, in Whitehall. Camps and demonstrations 9 am-8 pm Saturday, 9 am-1 pm Sunday. Battles 3 pm Saturday, 11 am Sunday. friendsofcampgeiger.webs.com

7 VA Car-caravan and walking tour, “‘The Fearful Peril’: Civil War Staunton,” 4-6 pm. Free. Details, registration: shenandoahatwar.org/event/tour-of-civil-war-staunton

7 VA Tour, “If Any Man Runs, I will Shoot Him’: The Battle of Piedmont,” 10 am-noon. Free but registration required: shenandoahatwar.org

8 VA Car-caravan tour, “Battle of Old Men and Young Boys,” 1.5-hour tour meets the the Exchange Building, West Bank Street in Petersburg. Free. nps.gov/pete

8 PA Lecture, “Mississippi and the Care of Confederate Veterans,” at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg. 1 pm. Free with admission. nationalcivilwarmuseum.org

8 DC/MD Bus tour, “Booth’s Escape Route.” Trace the assassin’s path in this Smithsonian tour with Ed Bearss. Leaves 8 am from 550 C St SW, Washington. \$220. smithsonianassociates.org(click on Civil War).

8 MD Lecture, “Hell Comes to Southern Maryland’: The History of Point Lookout Civil War Camp for Confederate Prisoners,” at the Surratt House Museum in Clinton. 4 pm. Free. surrattmuseum.org

8-9 MD Living history, camps and demonstrations at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick. Free. Details: nps.gov/mono

13 VA Anniversary tours, “Second Battle of Winchester.” See kernstownbattle.org for details.

15 VA Anniversary living history and walking tours, “The Opening Attacks at Petersburg,” at the Petersburg National Battlefield. 10 am-4 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete

15 VA Lecture, “Summer on the USS Monitor,” at the Mariners’ Museum in Newport News. 2:30 pm. Free with admission (\$1). marinersmuseum.org

15 PA “An Evening with the Painting,” a special behind-the-scenes look at the Gettysburg Cyclorama at the Gettysburg NMP visitor center. 5-7 pm. \$20/adult. Reservations: gettysburgfoundation.org

15 MD Historic house tours, “Best House,” at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick. 10 am-4 pm. Free. nps.gov/mono

18 VA Ranger talk, “Prelude to the Battle of the Crater,” at Stop 7, Petersburg National Battlefield. 2 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete

22 MD Ranger program, “Enslavement in the Free State: The Story of L’Hermitage,” the history of a

French/Caribbean plantation on what became the Monocacy battlefield at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick. 10 am at the Best Farm. Free. nps.gov/mono

22-23 VA Living history, camp, demonstrations and special immersive program at the Spotsylvania Court House Battlefield near Fredericksburg (Stop 3). 10 am-5 pm Saturday, 10 am-3 pm Sunday. Free. nps.gov/frsp

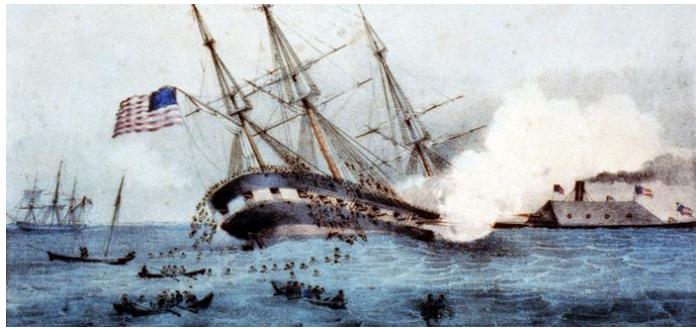
22-23 VA Living history, “Action Front,” non-firing artillery demonstrations at the Ball’s Bluff Battlefield Regional Park north of Leesburg off Route 15. 9 am-5 pm Saturday, 10 am-3 pm Sunday. Free. novaparks.com/parks/balls-bluff-battlefield-regional-park

29 MD Lecture, “History Lost and Found: Antietam Diary of C.D.M. Broomhall, 124th PA,” at the Pry House Field Hospital Museum, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville. 11 am. \$5. civilwarmed.org

29 MD Living history, Federal artillery camp and demonstrations at the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Free with park admission. nps.gov/anti

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

30 MD Living history, Confederate infantry artillery and infantry camps and demonstrations at the Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg. Free with park admission. nps.gov/anti



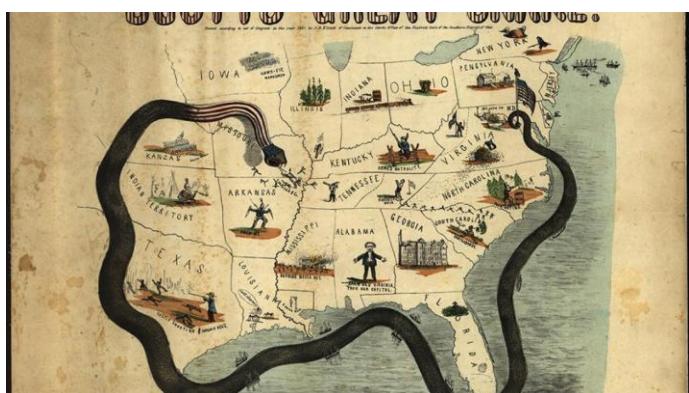
10 Facts: Civil War Navies

January 9, 1861 - November 6, 1865

On the seas and on the rivers, the duelling navies of the Civil War irrevocably shaped the fates of the armies on land. Please use these ten facts to expand your understanding of this oft-overlooked theater of action.

Fact #1: The Union “Anaconda Plan” relied heavy on sea supremacy.

Winfield Scott, brevet lieutenant-general in command of the entire Federal army, presented Abraham Lincoln with a grand strategy for the war shortly before the Battle of Bull Run. The “Anaconda Plan” called for a stiff blockade of Southern seaports in conjunction with an amphibious advance along the line of the Mississippi River. These operations would strangle the Confederate economy, based so heavily on the international cotton trade, and split the rebellious nation apart. Although the slow and relentless squeeze of the plan was disparaged by critics who thought the conflict would be over in a matter of months, Lincoln stuck by Scott’s blueprint throughout the war.



Library of Congress

Fact #2: The Union navy grew by 600% to meet the demands of the war.

At the outset of the Civil War, the Federal navy was composed of around ninety ships, only around forty of which were close to combat-capable. The central demand of Scott’s Anaconda Plan—a blockade roughly 3000 miles in length—was far beyond what the navy was able to provide. Old ships were filled with stones and sunk in blocking positions around Southern harbors to buy time for the engineers rushing to lay down a new fleet of warships. Hundreds of civilian ships were pressed into service as well. Passenger ferries, their sturdy decks built to hold horse carriages, adapted especially well to their new role as river gunboats. The Union navy grew to comprise more than six hundred ships by 1865, the largest in the world at the time, giving the North a consistent advantage in the war on the water.

Fact #3: Naval dominance on the rivers allowed the Federals to gain an edge in the war on land.

River combat played a pivotal role in the conflict—armies could use rivers for supply routes, for fast infantry transport, and for the bombardment of enemy positions. The western theater was particularly defined by the struggle for control of the Mississippi River, which factored as highly into the final outcome as any other aspect of the war. Ulysses S. Grant claimed that he could not have taken the fort at Vicksburg, Mississippi without the navy. Successful river operations demanded high-tech ironclad and steam powered fleets and led to the development of naval strategies that are still used by the American military. In terms of the number of sailors involved and the miles of river contested, the scale of the Civil War on “brown water” exceeds all other American wars, with Vietnam second.

Fact #4: The Civil War featured the first battle between ironclad ships.

The refinement of steam powered ships changed the face of naval warfare in the late 19th century. In addition to giving ships far more freedom to maneuver against winds and currents, the extra power allowed them to carry heavier guns and heavier armor. The new technology made its historical debut when the world witnessed the first engagement between ironclad warships at Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862. The USS Monitor and CSS Virginia battled for hours before reaching a stalemate—neither carried the kind of armor-piercing shells necessary to pierce an iron hull. Nevertheless, the Battle of Hampton Roads demonstrated the viability of ironclad technology and provided a glimpse of the future of naval warfare.



The CSS Virginia, left, sank two wooden-hulled ships before being stopped by the USS Monitor. (Library of Congress)

Fact #5: The first successful submarine attack took place during the Civil War.

The H.L. Hunley, named for its inventor, Horace Hunley, put to sea in the summer of 1863. It was an eight-man submarine armed with a bomb mounted on the end of a 22-foot pole, known as a “spar torpedo.” Seized by the Confederacy shortly after its construction, her life was short but celebrated. She sank twice during early tests, claiming the lives of thirteen crewmen including Hunley himself. Salvaged by persistent officers, the Hunley stole

out of Charleston Harbor on February 17, 1864 and crept towards the blockader USS *Housatonic*. In this, her only combat mission, she successfully sank the *Housatonic* before sinking herself for reasons still unknown. Despite this perilous beginning, engineers around the world were awakened to the potential of submarine technology. Fifty years later, 375 German “U-Boats” were wreaking havoc on the high seas.

Fact #6: Southern raiders terrorized Northern traders, reducing the strength of the Northern merchant fleet by half.



The screw-sloop CSS Alabama was the most famous Confederate raider of the war, capturing or sinking over 60 prize.

Naval Historical Center

Outmanned and outgunned, the Confederates engaged in asymmetrical warfare on the high seas – intercepting Union trading ships to burn or seize their cargo. The most famous of these commerce raiders, CSS Alabama, never docked in a Confederate port and seized over seventy vessels in the Atlantic and Pacific before she was finally defeated off the coast of Cherbourg, France on June 19, 1864. The CSS *Florida* built a squadron of captured and converted ships that altogether took sixty prizes. Confederate sailors circumnavigated the globe and some landed in ports as far-flung as Singapore, Australia, South Africa, and Brazil. Although the Northern merchant fleet began the war with roughly 5,000 ships, many were sunk and many more were sold to foreigners by frightened owners, reducing the total to less than 2,500 by the end of the war. This feat was accomplished by less than twenty Confederate ships. The sensational nature of their exploits won international headlines and more directly affected the lives of foreign populations than the war’s land battles.

Fact #7: The Union blockade failed to stop the majority of ships that tested it, but successfully

deterred the majority of the South’s pre-war international trade.

Much post-war debate has been focused on the effectiveness of the Anaconda Plan and the Union blockade. One Southern account scorns it as a “practical joke” while another claims it was a stranglehold. Considering foreign trade, it is true that most ships that tried to get through the blockade were successful—roughly 1,000 of 1,300 foreign vessels passed unharmed—but this fact is only part of the blockade’s larger impact. Although a total of 8,500 commercial vessels, including domestic Southern ships, slipped into Southern ports during the war, the volume of trade was a far cry from the 20,000 ships that docked in the years from 1856-60. The trade of cotton, the South’s largest cash crop, plummeted by 95% during the war. Although the bravery of the blockade runners provided the Confederacy with much-needed war materials and made gambling European merchants rich, the blockade still successfully suppressed a huge portion of the Southern economy.

Fact #8: Diplomatic naval crises brought the North and Great Britain to the brink of war--twice.

The specter of foreign intervention on the side of the Confederacy weighed heavily on Abraham Lincoln’s mind. Events proved his concerns to be well-placed. The first crisis came in November, 1861 when a Union frigate intercepted a British mail ship, the RMS *Trent*, and seized two Confederate envoys that were on their way to England to lobby for intervention. In what became known as the *Trent Affair*, British politicians protested the affront and began a military build-up in Canada; American citizens called for war and even Lincoln indulged in some saber-rattling during his 1861 State of the Union Address. Tensions eventually eased, however, when Lincoln ordered the release of the hostages without an apology.

The second crisis came when Union spies uncovered the “Laird Ram” plot in late 1862. The spies insisted, correctly, that two ships being built in British docks for the King of Egypt--seagoing ironclads with rapid-firing revolving turrets, altogether the most powerful ships the world had yet seen—were in reality destined for the Confederacy. Lincoln, already greatly annoyed Britain’s unsubtle production of other warships for the South, would not stand for this potentially balance-shifting transaction. He threatened war, forcing the British to back down and buy the ships for themselves. The awkwardness of the issue, combined with the Civil War’s shifting tides, prompted the British to significantly decelerate their support for the Confederacy as the war continued. Nevertheless, an international arbitration

court, the first in world history, ultimately awarded the United States 15.5 million dollars in reparations for the British contributions to the Confederate navy. Great Britain paid, but did not admit guilt.



Fact #9: New Orleans, the largest city in the South, was captured primarily through naval action.

The period of economic and commercial expansion following the Louisiana Purchase earned New Orleans the moniker of “the Jewel in the Mouth of the Mississippi.” With a population that exceeded the size of the other four largest Confederate cities combined, five hundred million dollars passed through the city’s port in 1860. Its supreme importance to Southern commerce made it an early target of Flag Officer [David G. Farragut](#), commanding the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. From the fall of 1861 until the spring of 1862 the contending navies dueled in the Gulf of Mexico, with Farragut gaining the upper hand after an early setback at the Battle of the Head of the Passes. In April of 1862, he led an attack up the Mississippi River, aiming to get his ships past Forts Jackson and St. Philip and in a position to bombard the city with impunity. After twelve days of combat, Fort Jackson was in shambles and the Union fleet had its cannons trained on New Orleans. With no organized infantry defense, New Orleans fell to an expeditionary force of 5,000 men on May 1, 1862. Its capture catapulted

Farragut to fame—including a promotion to become the nation’s first admiral—and dealt a severe blow to the Confederacy.

Fact #10: The sailors on the CSS Shenandoah were the last Confederates to lower their flag.

The CSS *Shenandoah*, built in Britain and obtained by the Confederacy in October of 1864, operated as a commerce raider in the Atlantic, Indian, and Arctic Oceans for twelve-and-a-half months. Under the command of James Waddell, she captured seventeen prizes—mostly whaling ships—and was en route to attack San Francisco when Waddell learned of the end of the Civil War on land from the crew of the HMS *Barracouta*. The two ships encountered each other on August 2, 1865, more than two months after the last Confederate army had surrendered. Concerned that he and his crew would be hanged as pirates in the United States, Waddell set a course for Liverpool, England and surrendered to the British government on November 6, 1865, the last Confederates to lower their flag by a five-month margin. Waddell and his crew scattered, some making permanent new homes in foreign nations, some returning to the United States once the threat of execution subsided. The CSS *Shenandoah* was the only Confederate ship to circumnavigate the globe during the war.

Battle of Nashville

Despite a series of defeats in the closing days of November, 1864, Confederate Lieut. Gen. John Bell Hood continued to drag his bloodied Army of Tennessee, approximately 30,000 strong, north towards Nashville. The city was protected by 55,000 Union soldiers, which should have precluded further offensive operations, but Hood was determined and his situation was dire. Hood reached Nashville on December 2nd and staked out a position south of the city, hoping to draw the Union forces into a costly attack. Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln urged Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas to attack but he delayed for nearly two weeks, citing freezing weather and limited cavalry support. On December 15th, Thomas finally moved forward. The Union plan called for a demonstration on the Confederate right while the main assault struck a cluster of earthen redoubts on the Confederate left. The diversionary attack broke against artillery posted along present-day Battery Lane. To the west, fierce close-range combat erupted as Thomas’s men swept over the redoubts. That night, Hood retreated two miles further south. Thomas renewed the attack the next afternoon. After several hours of fighting, Brig. Gen. John McArthur broke through the Confederate left at Shy’s

Hill. Hood ordered a hasty retreat south, and only a skillful rearguard action allowed his army to escape. The Union victory at Nashville shattered Hood's Army of Tennessee and effectively ended the war in Tennessee.

RESULT

Union Victory

COMMANDERS

UNION

George Thomas

CONFEDERATE

John Bell Hood

FORCES ENGAGED

85,000

Union
55,000

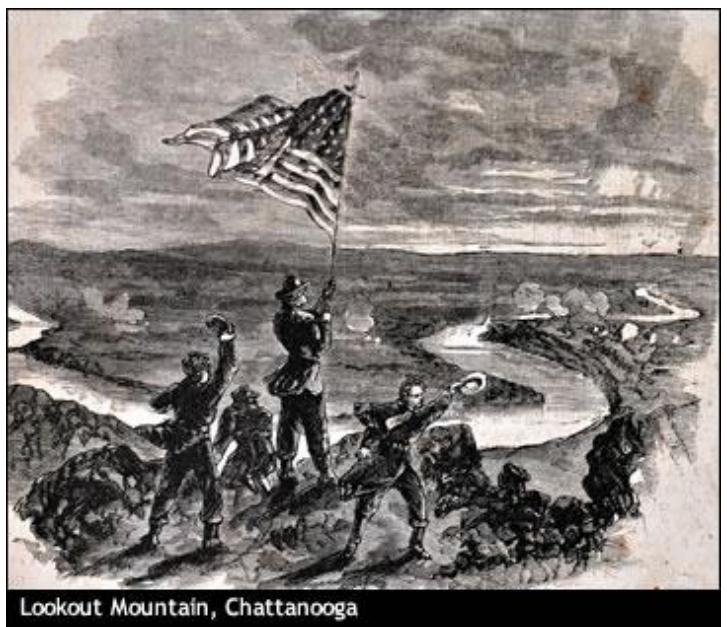
Confederate
30,000

TOTAL ESTIMATED CASUALTIES

9,061

Union
3,061

Confederate
6,000



Lookout Mountain, Chattanooga

Cape May County Civil War Round Table
c/o

