

National Civil War Association

Dispatch

MARCH 2021



NCWA1863.org

P.O. Box 266, Santa Clara, California 95052

**NEXT COMBINED BOARD MEETING:
Saturday, April 10, 2021 at 12:05 p.m.
Venue to be announced; details to follow.**

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

UPCOMING TACTICAL!

Our first event of the year will be the **Elk Grove Tactical** on **Saturday and Sunday, March 27 and 28.**

I am very excited at the prospect of seeing everyone! This is a beautiful new site, and we have a public event scheduled here for May 1 and 2, with a school day on April 30, virus and the State of California permitting. After a year of downtime, this is the perfect opportunity to brush up on your skills, and to get to know our new site at Mahon Ranch.

There will be a workday to prepare the site on Thursday, March 25, with camping for those who participate. Set-up for all participants will be Friday, March 26. Battle and other events will be March 27 and 28. Firewood and water will be available on site. Contact your brigade or unit CO for further details.

There will also be food available for \$10.00. If you wish to buy in, please contact Jon Nickerson-Tremayne at tremor1863@yahoo.com ASAP.

Prospective menu:

Friday Night: Red beans and rice

Saturday Breakfast: Biscuits and gravy

Saturday Lunch: Grab and Go (assorted finger food)

Saturday Night: Corned beef and cabbage, Eastern European style

Sunday Breakfast: Eggs, ham and potatoes

Sunday Lunch: Grab and Go

Orders of the Day:

Saturday

0700: Reveille

0715: Unit Roll Call

0800: Breakfast

0815: Officer's Call

0900: Unit Drill

1000: Dress Parade

1045: Battalion Drill

1200: Lunch

1400: "Road march" (expect to meet the enemy!)

1700: End of Military Day

2000: Pickets Posted

Sunday

0700: Reveille

0715: Roll Call

0800: Breakfast

0815: Officer's Call

0900: Drill

1000: Sunday Service

1200: Road March and/or battle (TBD)

1300: Conclusion and Departure

Jon Nickerson-Tremayne
Vice President, NCWA



FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

As we get ready to start our long-anticipated reenacting season, I wanted to give you all a brief history of our town of Crossroads.

We portray a town that was established many years ago, while this area was still a colony. Several of the local families have been here since Crossroads was originally established. We love our town, and are quite proud of our local businesses as well as our civic-minded citizens. That is our period history.

As far as the NCWA history goes: way back in the mid-1990s the Civilian Corps decided our Town (as it was then called) needed a name. One former member did some research into Centerville, VA and suggested we call ourselves Centerville. And so we adopted that name.

However, a few years later further research into the original Centerville came to light. By 1860, it had become known as a slave-breeding center. As this was **not** the impression we wanted to present, the name was dropped and we reverted back to Town.

More recently (2018-19) several members voiced a desire to once again name our Town. We took suggestions from members and voted to adopt the name of Crossroads.

This simple, somewhat generic name has a great deal of meaning. 1) In just about every area of this country, small towns and villages have sprung up at major road intersections—or at the Crossroads. 2) A division between differing political elements or philosophies can be a Crossroads. 3) At this point (1863) the war has yet to be decided and we are at a Crossroads as to the outcome. 4) With the Town frequently located between the Armies &/or the battlefield, we are literally at the Crossroads. That is a lot for us to live up to, but we are ready for the challenge!

So, our Civilians would like to invite everyone to visit us in Crossroads. Everyone is welcome until/unless they prove themselves unwelcome. Come for a visit, stay for a while, and enjoy our fun little town of Crossroads!

Lynne Ashby
NCWA Civilian Corps Mayor
Resident of Crossroads



THE CONFEDERATE STATES NAVY'S FAMOUS IRONCLAD

The Confederate Navy's responsibility was to protect the harbors, rivers and coastlines from blockade. In February, 1861, the Confederate "Navy" amounted to some ten ships carrying fifteen guns.

At the same time, although they had 90 ships in the fleet, the Union Navy only had fourteen ships close enough to be called upon in case of emergency. Therefore, the Union Navy could not hope to blockade a coastline some 3,600 miles long with what they had.

So, in April of 1861, the two forces were as close to equal as they would ever be for the entire war. Things would not remain this way for very long.

The Confederates didn't invent the ironclad and might not have been the first to build one, as the United States Navy had been interested in the idea since shortly after the War of 1812. The French and the British Navies had ironclad ships, but they did not engage in battle. When the Gosport Navy Yard was evacuated after the secession of Virginia, the Confederate Navy secured one of the few major navy yards it was to possess. The Confederates captured more than one thousand naval guns of all calibers, including 52 Dahlgrens, but even more important than this was the capture of the 3,200 ton *USS Merrimac*, a steam frigate. Although the Federals burned it to the waterline, the Confederates had the basis for the most famous ironclad, the *CSS Virginia*.

The *Virginia* was plagued by problems. She was too light—the sides of her armor plate were on the water line instead of below it. The ship was extremely slow with a maximum speed of six to seven knots. She was extremely hard to maneuver; the steerage was so poor that it took from thirty to forty minutes to turn 180 degrees. Even with her shortcomings, the *CSS Virginia* was to be the foremost ironclad of the Confederate Navy. When on March 8, 1862, the *CSS Virginia* officially got under way and steamed into Hampton Roads, Union blockading forces consisted of five wooden-hulled frigates.

Signifying the safety of a port, the word "roads" (also called roadstead) in nautical terminology of the day meant "a place less sheltered than a harbor where ships may ride at anchor."

In the ensuing battle, which lasted five hours, two Union ships were sunk, a third damaged, almost 300 Union sailors were killed, and 100 were wounded.

On the following morning both Union and Confederate spectators expected to see the *CSS Virginia* finish the remaining ships of the blockading force and possibly head for Washington, D.C. As the *Virginia* approached the scene of the battle, her pilot spotted a strange flat craft with a turret mounted on the center, which was recognized as the *USS Monitor*, finished in time to take part in the battle.

The role of the Union craft was to protect other Union wooden-hulled ships in the Norfolk Harbor area. Thus, the *Monitor* did not act as offensively as she might have under different circumstances. As the battle continued, neither side was able to seriously damage the other, but the *CSS Virginia* was finally forced to retire because of the falling tide. The result of the battle was a tactical victory for the Union, because the *Monitor* had succeeded in protecting the remainder of the Union blockading fleet in the Norfolk Harbor area.

Kevin Groom
James River Squadron

SUGGESTED READING

***NO CERTAIN REST* by Jim Lehrer (2002)**

Here is a book to add to your pandemic reading list: Jim Lehrer's 2002 historical novel *No Certain Rest*. Its general battlefield discussions seem to be historically accurate, the author being a former national TV journalist known for his reporting research and accuracy. And of course, the author is well informed by Civil War re-enactors, so reenacting is also showcased in the novel.

The book bounces back and forth between the recent present and the 1862 Battle of Antietam, including the battle at Burnside Bridge, involving the 11th Connecticut Regiment.

The story follows a National Park Service archeologist who takes up the task of trying to identify the resident of battlefield grave newly discovered on private property just outside the Antietam National Battlefield's bounds. Relic hunters with metal detectors have picked up a Colt .44 pistol in the grave, as well as buckles, buttons, and such.

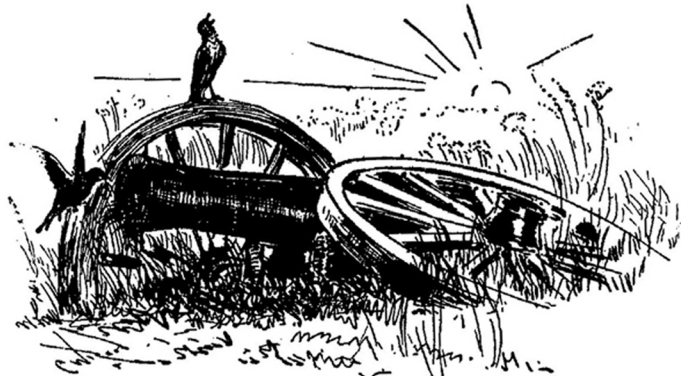
He works with other characters, including a retired history professor who specialized in the Battle of Antietam, forensics folks, a Department of Interior attorney, and others. He also manages to track down and to get hold of a letter with a related first-person account, along with other historical documents and tidbits, which had long sat in the safe deposit box of a historical society.

The plot thickens as the archeologist realizes the ID badge with the body does not seem to belong with it, and instead belongs to another soldier buried in one of the official battleground cemeteries. And the burial seems, unusually, to have been done by soldiers who fought in the battle, not by the local residents who had quickly buried the masses of decaying bodies, sometimes piled atop each other, spread out across 33 square miles, after the battle ended. And the grave has other anomalies as well, but from the buttons, buckles, etc., is clearly that of an army officer.

Needless to say, the archeologist ends up becoming a History Detective in multiple senses. So, check out your local library, enjoy the read, and perhaps suggest a book yourself?

Note: *Smithsonian Magazine* featured an article in 2017 about "Witness Trees", including one still standing today, which was photographed just after the battle, along bank right beside the Burnside Bridge. Here is a link: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/these-five-witness-trees-were-present-at-key-moments-in-americas-history-180963925/>

Floyd Cranmore
71st Pennsylvania



2021 CIVIL WAR REENACTING EVENT SCHEDULE

DATES	EVENT	SPONSOR
March 27-28	Elk Grove Tactical	NCWA
April 24-25	Capay Valley Tactical	NCWA
May 1-2 School Day April 30	Elk Grove	NCWA
May 29-30	Roaring Camp	ACWA
July 17-18	Duncan's Mills	ACWA
September 18-19 School Day September 17	Tres Piños	NCWA
October 2-3 School Day October 1	Marysville	NCWA

**IN THE EVENT OF ANY CHANGES TO THIS
SCHEDULE, NEW INFORMATION WILL BE
POSTED AS SOON AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE.**

ncwa1863.org

Post Office Box 266

Santa Clara, CA 95052



NCWA CONTACT INFORMATION

Admin Board President Phone Email	Borello, Skott (530) 417-4856 <i>civilwarskott@yahoo.com</i>
Admin Board Vice Pres. Phone Email	Nickerson, Jon (707) 320-3490 <i>tremor1863@yahoo.com</i>
Admin Board Secretary Phone Email	Van Petten, Melani (510) 531-6566 <i>melanivp@pacbell.net</i>
Admin Board Treasurer Phone Email	Pontin, Marcelo (415) 203-5996 <i>mpontin71@yahoo.com</i>
Civilian Mayor Email	Ashby, Lynne <i>townplanner@comcast.net</i>
Confederate Colonel Email	Nickerson, Jon <i>tremor1863@yahoo.com</i>
Union Colonel Email	Kenyon, Charles <i>outsdrs777@aol.com</i>

