



# *The Dispatch*

*Newspaper of the*

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

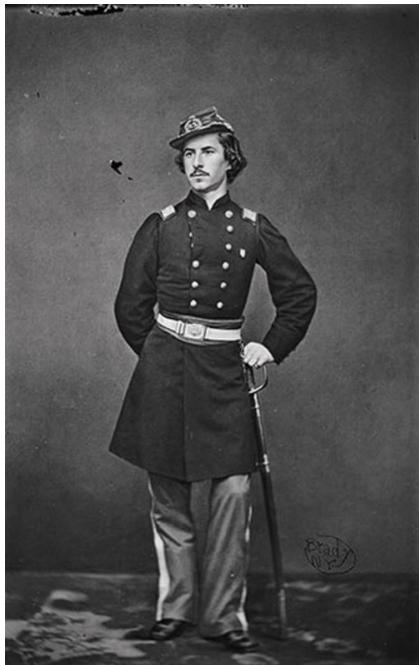
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## Col. Ellsworth's Remains Arrive in Albany



The body of Col. Elmer Ellsworth, late commanding officer of the 11<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry (First Zouave Regiment), is expected to arrive in Albany today, after a long journey from Washington. Crowds gathered along the railroad route to New York City to honor the fallen hero. A naval cortege will bring the remains to Albany, The body will lie in state at the Capital Building and then will be taken by boat to Troy and then Mechanicville where burial will occur at Hudson View Cemetery.

The 18<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Regiment will accompany the body in the funeral procession. The regiment was available in Albany, having been mustered in May 17, 1861. It has been awaiting departure to Washington, but this sad event will be the first official duty of the regiment.

# FEBRUARY MEETING

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2017

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER

1541 BROADWAY

WATERVLIET, NY

## **The New York State Rifles: History of a Forgotten Local Regiment By Ryan Conklin**

Social Hour	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Presentation	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Questions & Answers	8:00 – 8:30 p.m.

*The regular meeting of the CDCWRT will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center on Friday, February 10, 2017. Our guest speaker will be author, Ryan Conklin, and the title of his presentation will be, “The New York State Rifles: History of a Forgotten Local Regiment.”*

*Predominately a regiment from the Albany/Schenectady area, the 18th New York was one of the state’s earliest volunteer regiments to form in the first month of the war, and served for the first two years with the Army of the Potomac. This is the story about who these early patriots were, what they saw, and how their story is only now being told for the first time.*

*Raised in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Conklin has spent over a decade immersed in research of the 18th New York Infantry, a regiment that drew his interest from his direct ancestor having been a member. Being a veteran himself, Conklin served two tours in Iraq as an infantryman with the U.S. Army and published a memoir in 2010 on his*

*experiences there. Returning to his original research, Conklin published the first-ever telling of the regiment’s history in 2016, titled “The 18th New York Infantry in the Civil War: A History and Roster.”*

## **JANUARY BOARD MEETING**

At the meeting on January 15, the treasurer reported \$1,858.94 in the Regular Account and \$5,223.32 in the Preservation Account. \$1,000 was donated to the Civil War Trust Virginia Battlefield Challenge, and \$100 was donated to the Capital Region Underground Railroad History Project. A meeting where members may sell their own books is being planned. The year’s programs are set.

## **DUES ARE DUE**

This is a reminder that the annual dues of \$30 are due. The Treasurer will be present to accept cash, real Confederate money or checks. Checks may also be mailed to the CDCWRT at the address in our letterhead.

## **UP-COMING MEETING/EVENTS**

**On Friday, March 10, 2017**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Steve Trimm who will talk about a visit with Gen. U.S. Grant.

**On Friday, April 14, 2017**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Terri Olszowy who will talk about the Elmira Prison Camp.

**On Friday, May 12**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Chris Mackowski who will talk about Spotsylvania and the fighting at the Mule Shoe.

**On Friday, June 9**, the regular meeting of the CDCWRT will sponsor Amy Bracewell who will talk about Battlefield Preservation at Cedar Creek and Saratoga.

## **BUFORD'S VIEW – FEBRUARY**

*(A column by our Program Chair by Matt George.)*

Well, it appears that the third battle of the Casino War at Gettysburg will begin soon. Last week the owner of a nearby Harley dealership applied for a harness racing license and a license to operate a casino with slots and table games. In the past 10 years he has tried twice, unsuccessfully, to bring a casino to Gettysburg. The only good news is the proposed site (700 acres) is a little further away from the borders of the Gettysburg National Military Park than the previous attempts. The site is just east of where U. S. 15 crosses the Maryland-Pennsylvania state lines. On his last attempt, the Civil War Trust produced a beautiful and moving video on why a casino should not be located anywhere near Gettysburg. It will be interesting to see what the Trust's response to this new effort will be.

In a phone conversation I had yesterday with someone close to action, she indicated that the promoter is downplaying the Casino aspect and emphasizing that the project will include a convention center and that it will bring jobs to the community. However, how true this will prove to be is uncertain. It is a question how many new jobs employing locals, might be at the minimum wage level. Higher paying jobs employing gambling professionals in all areas of the business will prioritize individuals with experience. It is logical to believe they will be drawn from the many closing casinos in Atlantic City and elsewhere.

I was first made aware of this thanks to an e-mail from our good friend Blair Pavlik and the Connecticut Civil War Round table in Torrington, Connecticut.

If you missed our November speaker Neil Yetwin's talk on Schenectady's abolitionist minister Horace Day, he will be giving this talk again at the Mabee Farm House Historic Site in Rotterdam Junction at 2:00 PM, Saturday, February 11, 2017. This is the same location

where we held our 4th Sesquicentennial Conference.

On Saturday, February 18 the Underground Railroad History Project will holding a mini Conference on African Burial Grounds. Individuals from Schenectady, Albany, Kinderhook, Nassau, Troy, the N. Y. S. Museum, the N. Y. S. Office of Historic Preservation and the Schuyler Flatts Burial Project will gather together to discuss constructive ways of mutual support and how to honor those buried at various sites. Also to be discussed are ways how groups can help each other with grant identification and writing. The mini Conference will be held at the Stephen and Harriet Myers House, 194 Livingston Ave., Albany from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. There is a \$10.00 charge. Their main Conference is planned for March.

In June & July, I will be traveling to Gettysburg for the Re-enactment. We will be doing our usual commemorative Postal Cancellation to raise money for battlefield preservation. Joining me will be 15 year old Richard Lalosh and his Grandfather. Rich you might remember was our first presenter at our Potpourri night. He gave that excellent PowerPoint presentation on his ancestor Charles Ellerson who fought at Gettysburg.

Round Table member and my cousin, Mark Allen, who lives just south of Gettysburg, will probably be assisting as well. I have a double room reserved at a local hotel for June 29, 30, July 1, 2, and 3. I am the only one in it. If anyone else is interested in attending on any or all of those nights please contact me.

Finally, we have each year in June, traveled to Peterboro to be at the Peterboro Civil War weekend. However, this June (9th, 10th & 11th) is the same weekend at the CWT Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Several others and I will be at this Conference. To avoid cancelling our participation at the Peterboro event (and forfeiting the money we would raise for battlefield preservation) we will need some volunteers to be there for at least one day of the

weekend. It is truly unfortunate that these two events are on the same weekend.

## GETTYSBURG MUSKETS

In the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg, local newspapers reported that 30,000 to 50,000 muskets were retrieved from the battlefield. It was later reported that the Union Army collected 37,574 firearms left on the field of battle: 24,000 of these were loaded; 12,000 contained two loads and 6,000 contained from 3 to 10 loads. One musket contained two dozen rounds crammed into it.

In the November 2017 issue of *The Civil War News* there was mention in the **Black Powder, White Smoke** section of the paper about those muskets. Earlier, one of the writers for the News did some research that led to a bit of debunking. He could not find any official provenance for the claim, but had traced it back to an 1867 West Point textbook which unfortunately gave no references. "When you think about it, it does seem unlikely that you could cram two dozen down a rifle musket barrel, even under the stress of combat." The writer, Craig Barry, was an assiduous researcher, but could not find any primary source material for the claim.

The author of the Black Powder column searched his files also, but came up empty. But he did find a copy of an order in the regimental books of the 15th NJVI.

In 1864, the Provost Marshall of the Army of the Potomac noted many of the men in the ranks had never fired their muskets and cited the lack of firearms instruction in the army. He instructed all units to have each man load and fire his musket in the presence of an officer. One reason he cited for the necessity of such training was that muskets had been found on the battlefield "loaded to the muzzle" with cartridges. The only significant battlefield the Army of the Potomac had held after the fighting in the previous year was Gettysburg.

Well, in the January 2017 issue of *The Civil War News*, was a letter from Charles Pate, a long-time researcher of U.S. Army Ordnance Department records at the National Archives. Pate's primary interest is in cavalry arms, but when he came across an interesting item, he made a note of it for his files, such as:

1/4/1864, Record Group 156, Entry 20, Volume 40, Letter W28 of 1864:

Capt. Benton at Washington Arsenal forwarded a report of Master Armorer J. Dudley re the condition of small arms received from the battlefield.

1/4/1864, RG156, E201, Report #376:

Master Armorer J. Dudley reported to Capt. Benton on small arms received from the battlefield. He based his report on the arms taken from the Gettysburg battlefield. Of the number received (27,574), at least 24,000 of them were loaded. About one half (12,000) contained two loads each; one fourth (6000) contained from three to ten loads each; and the rest (6000) had only one load.

Some of the guns had two to six balls with only one charge of powder, and in some cases, the ball was at the bottom of the barrel with the powder charge on top of it. In some arms, as many as six paper cartridges were found whole — not having been torn open. Twenty-three loads were found in one Springfield rifle, each load being in regular order.

Twenty-two balls and sixty-two buckshot with a corresponding quantity of powder, all mixed up together, were found in one percussion smooth-bore musket.

Mr. Dudley also stated: "About six thousand of the arms were found loaded with Johnson's and Dow's cartridges, many of these cartridges were found about half way down in the barrels of the guns, and in many cases, the ball end of the cartridge had been put into the gun first. These cartridges were

found mostly in the Enfield Rifle Musket.”

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Without knowing where to look, this report was difficult to find. It should have been filed in the letters received by the Chief of Ordnance, which was **Entry 21** in the Chief of Ordnance records (Record Group 156).

But for some unknown reason or recording error, The Ordnance Office instead filed the report with “Reports of Experiments.” Which the National Archives cataloged as **Entry 201**.

**Editor’s note: The Johnson and Dow cartridge was a patent inflammable cartridge designed to replace the paper cartridge. It accelerated the loading process by omitting the need to tear a**

***paper cartridge, pour the black powder down the muzzle, disengage the ball from the paper, discard the paper and finally ram the ball down. This cartridge was issued to a number of Army of the Potomac units in the spring of 1862 on a trial basis.***



***At the battle of Gaines’ Mill, the 1<sup>st</sup> New Jersey Brigade used Johnson and Dow bullets resulting in rapid and incessant fire. One soldier recalled that after the barrel warmed, it was only necessary to insert the cartridge and give the weapon a slight shock on the ground, and it was home and ready to fire. Reviews of the ammunition were complimentary, so it is a mystery why it was not widely adopted.***

So what happened at Gettysburg? The British Enfield had a slightly smaller bore diameter than the Springfield musket. At Gettysburg, the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine had trouble loading conventional musket ammunition in their Enfields after the first few rounds, once fouling had built up in the bore.

The initial bullet diameter established for Minie balls in the US Springfield was .5775 and the Johnson and Dow rounds were probably the same. Subsequent ammunition was produced in .574 diameter, which could be used in both Springfields and Enfields.

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*Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly in various locations in the Capital District. This newsletter is published eleven times per year. Annual dues are \$30. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.*

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