



# The Dispatch



Newsletter of the

**Capital District Civil War Round Table**

P.O. Box 8874, Albany, NY 12208

Volume 11 Number 10

June 1994

## A Civil War Medical Reenactment

with  
**Alvan Jacques**

The June program will feature Alvan Jacques as a Civil War surgeon. Jacques will demonstrate some of the most "popular" medical procedures and techniques used during the Civil War.

Alvan Jacques is a member of the 125th New York and a seasoned reenactor. Please join us for what promises to be an unusual and entertaining evening. Remember, this is our last meeting until September.



### JUNE MEETING

**Friday, June 24, 1994**  
Bethlehem Public Library  
Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY

Doors Open: 7:00 PM  
Program Begins: 7:30 PM

### June 25th: Tribute to John Miller

A memorial tribute to John Miller will be held at Grant Cottage on Saturday, June 25th at 1:30 p.m. The program will include a color guard from a living history regiment (tentative), music of the period, tours of the Cottage and of the Eastern Outlook. Bring lawn chairs. Call Grant Cottage at (518) 587-8277 for further details.

### October 7 – 10: Gettysburg Trip

Don't miss this year's exciting field trip to Gettysburg for two full days of in-depth studies. The trip features four one-half day segments conducted by four different Gettysburg specialists. Each of our guides will focus on a different area of the battlefield. [Please Note: members must travel to Gettysburg on their own.] See the enclosed flyer for all the details.



### Dues, Dues, Dues!!!!

Don't forget to renew your membership. Your membership expiration date is on the mailing label of each month's *Dispatch*. Membership is still a bargain at \$15. Send check to CDCWRT, PO Box 8874, Albany, NY 12208.

## **G** *ettysburg Opens On Television June 26 & 27*

The film *Gettysburg* will make its television debut on Turner Network Television (TNT) June 26 and 27 as a two-part miniseries. The schedule for televising, is as follows:

June 26, Part 1, 8 -- 11 p.m.

June 27, Part 2, 8 -- 11 p.m.

The film will be followed by *Gettysburg Journal*, which includes footage from the video which was given to reenactor participants.

## **C** *anal Days July 9 & 10*

A Canal Days celebration will be held at Schoharie Crossing on July 9th and 10th and will include 18th and 19th century crafts, exhibits, demonstrations, and a tour of the canal's locks. Questions about the day's festivities can be addressed to Sue Knost (518) 393-6851.

## **G** *uides Needed for Military Heritage Museum*

Volunteer guides are needed by the Military Heritage Museum. Two shifts are available: 10:00 a.m. -- 1:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. -- 4:00 p.m. Anyone interested should call Bryan Gosling at 765-4041.

## **C** *DCWRT Supports TaLEnt Program in Albany Schools*

The TaLEnt Program of the City School District of Albany is designed to bring enrichment activities and enhanced understanding of

curriculum to the elementary school population (grades 4 through 6) throughout the city.

Last month's *Dispatch* included a call to CDCWRT members who would be willing to make presentations on some aspect of the Civil War. As usual, our members met the call. The following is from Barbara Quackenbush, Coordinator of the TaLEnt Program:

The TaLEnt Program has just completed Civil War units in two schools, aided by the Capital District Civil War Round Table. Thank you to the members who responded to my request for help in bringing enrichment and expertise to the students of the City School District of Albany. Enthusiasm for learning more about the Civil War period has been engendered in a number of fifth graders through your presentations. Special thanks to Michael Barrett, for his expertly guided tour through the collection of the Military Heritage Museum, to Richard Straight, for his discussion of life as a Union soldier on two occasions, and to Ray Smith for his presentation on Civil War era music. These presentations were gratefully and enthusiastically received by our students.

The kind of experience that you have helped us to provide for our students is invaluable. Most of them will never journey out of our own geographic area, yet you have helped them to travel through time and space to a different life. All of them gained appreciation of history and life, and perhaps a few gained a life time interest.

Again, on behalf of the schools and students that you have helped, my sincere thanks. We are most grateful to the Round Table for sharing your interest and expertise, and hope that more members might help us to enrich our students education in the future.

Sincerely,

*Barbara*

## Monument Restoration Project Update

Last month's *Dispatch* included an article about a new project to restore the Schenectady County GAR monument located at Veteran's Park in downtown Schenectady. The article incorrectly reported the effort was being sponsored by the 125th NY Regimental Association. The Sons of Union Veterans are the ones spearheading this local preservation effort. The following is from a letter to the Round Table written by Lewis D. Warner, Chairman of the Preservation Committee of the Sons of Union Veterans:

The brave men of the Union Army and Navy ably defended their country from the forces of rebellion during the Civil War. After the Civil War, the Grand Army of the Republic, the survivors of that struggle, erected monuments in towns and cemeteries throughout our country to serve as eternal reminders to future generations of Americans of the great deeds performed and the suffering endured in the cause of the Union.

Today we are engaged in another war on the Civil War's home front, a war against thieves, vandals, and the ravages of time that are attacking these monuments and threaten to destroy the message our ancestors have sent us from the past. When a monument is destroyed or defaced, so is its message, and that robs the past, the present, and the future. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, a national fraternal order of male direct descendants of Union Veterans, have sworn to perpetuate the ideals of the GAR and defend its monuments and grave sites. The Col. George L. Willard Camp # 154 represents the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in the Capital District, and has done so for 100 years. Never in the history of the Camp, though, have the Civil War monuments in our area been in such peril. Time and the forces of nature have been as

unforgiving as the vandals; many monuments are in a sorry state of disrepair.

One such monument in need of immediate attention is the Schenectady County GAR monument located at Veteran's Park in Downtown Schenectady. Several monument companies have been contacted and have given their recommendations as to what needs to be done to restore the monument to its original splendor. The entire marble structure will be cleaned with several different types of chemicals which will not damage the marble in any way and restore it to its original color. The bronze sculpture will also be restored to its original condition and a sealant applied to the entire monument to prohibit future deterioration. The project will be completed by Western Building Restoration of Albany, who recently restored the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Albany.

In order to preserve our Civil War heritage, and because we can't do it without help from other concerned members of the community, the Col. Willard Camp has begun a Civil War Monument Fund. This will enable us to continue rehabilitating local monuments.

Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Lewis D. Warner*

The CDCWRT has donated \$200.00 to the Monument Fund.

## Bray Tyrell Honored

This past October 26, 1993, long-time CDCWRT member Bray Tyrell died. The Round Table honored Bray's contributions to the round table by making a memorial gift to the Bethlehem Public Library

in Bray's name. Mrs. Bray Tyrell accepted the gift in a ceremony held at our May meeting.



**Sue Knost & Mrs. Bray Tyrell**

We recently received this nice acceptance note from the Bethlehem Public Library:

Thank you for your generous gift in honor of Bray Tyrell. We were pleased to be able to obtain the book and proud to receive it from the group. Such memorial gifts enrich the collection and honor fine people in the community.

Very truly yours,

*Barbara P. Mladinov*

Director



## **L**ocal Connections --30th NY Volunteers by Michael Barrett

This piece is a follow-up to Bob Mulligan's report on the death and funeral of Col. Edward Frisby of Albany, commander of the 30th New York Volunteer Infantry, who perished at Second Manassas, and relates to some of the other local members of that regiment.

Company A of the 30th was commanded by Capt. Samuel King, of Lansingburg. This company was composed almost entirely of volunteer firemen from the village, and the men had enlisted and taken their oaths of allegiance together while wearing their fire department dress uniforms. Samuel King was a successful merchant, and had been active in the fire department as well as a local militia unit before the war. Enlisting on April 24, 1861, at age 34, he was commissioned as Captain of the "Fire Company." His First Lieutenant was John H. Campbell, and Francis Dargen was Second Lieutenant.

Second Manassas was the first heavy engagement that the regiment had participated in. On August 30, 1862, they were in Sullivan's brigade of Hatch's Division in Porter's Corp, which had been gathered in the Groveton Woods in preparation for the assault against Stonewall Jackson's line in the unfinished railroad. The 30th was in the forefront of the attack and it was here that Frisby was shot off his horse during the advance, and Captain King and Lt. Dargen fell while bringing their company up against the 8 foot high pile of fill that shielded the Confederate defenders. King was shot through the lungs, and lived until early the following morning, when he was buried in an unmarked grave. Dargen also lived for 25 hours after he was shot, and his body was interred in a different grave on the field. Six other men of the company also perished as a result of the attack.

## THE RECOVERY OF CAPT. KING'S BODY

[Unidentified newspaper account, believed  
to be the Lansingburg Gazette, Sept. 18,  
1862]

The experiences of Mr. Peter King, of Lansingburg, in recovering the body of his brother Capt. King, were of the most interesting yet terrible character. The manner in which the Rebels behaved to him while on his errand of mercy, showed a tenderness and humanity that contradict many statements of barbarity to their foes. He procured a flag of truce, which was respected by the enemy, and made a search for the body beyond Centreville. Not finding it, he returned to Washington, and afterwards paid a second visit, in company with Dr. Chapin, Surgeon of the Thirtieth regiment. Although the time agreed on by the flag of truce had expired the enemy gave him three days further in which to prosecute his search. Mr. King finally found the body of his brother in a grave that he had previously opened but as strange forms had been placed over it, he did not at first identify it.... While Mr. King was prosecuting his search, with the brother of Lieut. Dargen, the latter was recognized from his resemblance to the deceased officer, by a young man named Simpson of Morgan's rebel cavalry. He was formerly a student at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and also a member of the Washington Volunteer Fire company. He sends his best wishes to Rev. J. N. Parker, with whom he formerly boarded.

Sam King's body arrived back in Troy on Sept. 20, 1862, and a large funeral and parade were held the following day. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, in the family plot along the shore of Long Pond, which he had purchased in 1853 upon the death of his infant daughter. He left a widow and four surviving children. His brother Peter, who should receive a "Brother of

the Century" award, lies just beyond him. His friend John H. Campbell, who succeeded him to the command of the company, and who survived the war, lies just a few feet to the east.

## **N**ew York State Museum Houses War Treasures From North and South *by Deborah Fitts*

The long-lost flag of the 1st New York Fire Zouaves, the unit whose commander Elmer Ellsworth became a Union martyr at the outset of the war, has been brought to light along with a variety of remarkable Civil War relics now being "rediscovered" in New York State's military-history collection.

Tom Duclos, curator of the more than 10,000 items belonging to the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, recently happened upon the flag in a cardboard box. Duclos is currently re-cataloguing the entire collection, which is housed in the Washington Avenue Armory two blocks from the state capitol.

The flag was known to be in the collection, but has been missing since around 1960. Historian Brian Pohanka says no photograph of the actual flag exists; in fact, the only images of it are period sketches by artists like Winslow Homer.

"This is quite a discovery," Pohanka says. "I dare say the New York Fire Zouaves were easily the most famous Union regiment in the first four months of the war, up to and including Bull Run." But the red-shirted New York firefighters, recruited by Ellsworth and "hyped as the most ferocious, elite volunteer regiment in the North," went to pieces at First Bull Run and were disbanded after nine month's service.

Duclos has been curator since 1988. He says that when he peered into the box and realized he had found the flag, "The hair stood up on the back of my neck."

"The flag is rolled -- it looks like somebody slid it right off the flag-pole," Duclos says. "I could see the fireman's horn."

Duclos has not unrolled the flag on account of its fragility. The painted silk is likely the standard size and shape: nearly square, six feet on a side. According to depictions of the flag, it is white and reads, "1st Regt. New York Zouaves." There are fire ladders, hooks, hydrants and a helmet, and alternating red, white and blue fringe around the edge.

The regiment was recruited by Ellsworth, a New Yorker and friend of President Lincoln, who popularized Zouave military units prior to the war. The 1st New York Fire Zouaves, officially the 11th New York Infantry, was known for its swagger and rowdiness. Ellsworth was killed a month after the war began, when he hauled a Southern flag from atop a rooming house in Alexandria, Va., on Washington's outskirts.

Duclos has that flag as well in the collection -- at 25 by 20 feet, in the "stars and bars" pattern, it was visible from Washington. And he has Ellsworth's bloody uniform.

These are among a number of "wonderful, wonderful items" that Duclos maintains. The collection extends from the French and Indian Wars to Desert Storm, but the bulk of it is Civil War.

Still, Duclos labors in some obscurity: only recently did he open a museum -- two exhibit rooms in the armory -- and visitors find their way there by word of mouth. "It's just a sleeper of a collection," says Duclos.

Nearly half the items are Confederate trophies of war brought home to New York. Among them, another recent rediscovery, is the sword of Confederate cavalry commander Turner Ashby. Duclos found the relic "jammed down in some boxes."

The Model 1840 steel saber was retrieved by a New York cavalry unit following action near

Harrisonburg, Va., in June 1862 when Ashby was killed. It has six inches missing from its tip -- supposedly broken when he fell.

Other highlights include Jubal Early's surgeon's kit; a dozen photos of Confederate camp scenes that Duclos believes have never been published; as many as 4000 cartes de visite of New York soldiers, mostly identified; several Confederate General Orders; the flag that draped Lincoln's body when he lay in state in Albany; and three dozen Confederate flags, including Bushrod Johnson's headquarters cavalry guidon and the 7th N.C. Cavalry regimental.

A major component of the collection is flags of New York units in the Civil War. There are nearly 1000 flags, most of them housed in tall oak display cases in the capitol and others scattered around the state's 74 armories.

The flags are the focus of a new drive by Duclos, who wants to see that they are properly conserved. While his budget has been "cut drastically over the past three years," many of the flags are brittle and crumbling.

With the help of the Capital District Civil War Round Table, which supplies Duclos with volunteer assistance and lobbying support, Duclos is kicking off a fundraising effort to rescue the flags.

About 80 percent of them were conserved during the 1960s by placing them between two layers of stiff netting and stitching zigzags through flag and net. Now the stitching is pulling at the silk. The flags must be painstakingly snipped from the netting and stabilized, at the very least. Those never conserved need attention before the silk falls to pieces.

"Once they're gone, they're gone," Duclos says. "A hundred years from now someone's going to say, 'Who was the idiot who didn't save these flags? They're just dust.'"

Duclos estimates the cost at \$3000 to \$5000 per flag -- a daunting figure. But using the flag of

the 95th N.Y. Infantry as the bellwether, the flag project is now getting under way (see related story).

Among the greatest rewards of Duclos's job is simply handling the items. He recalls the moment he noticed that the staff of the regimental flag of the 10th N.Y. had been struck by bullets.

"The bullets had to be where the man's hands were," Duclos says. "They had to be fatal, and yet those guys fought for the honor to carry the flag. It amazes me, the heart and soul they had."

Then there was the day he was going over the uniform of Lt. Col. John Wilson of the 45th N.Y., killed at the Wilderness. "I reach into his pocket and come up with a cigar. I think, 'My God, I'm probably the first person to touch this since he died.' I get chills thinking about it." The cigar is now in a plastic bag.

As a result of careless curatorial practices before his tenure, Duclos continues to recover "lost" items. He estimates that he has recovered or re-discovered \$300,000 worth of items that were mislabeled, misplaced or loaned out without paperwork.

Funding is a problem, and Duclos hopes that individuals, New Yorkers particularly, will urge state legislators to expand their fiscal support of the collection. Until recently there was no museum at all. His two exhibit rooms in the armory must cover all wars, and only a tiny fraction of the Civil War items are on display. He dreams of converting the entire building to a museum.

Historian Pohanka feels this would be fitting for what he calls "one of the most significant collections of Civil War Militaria in the country."

The exhibit rooms at the armory are open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Duclos also entertains serious requests from researchers who wish to view items in storage. He may be reached at (518) 436-0218; Military Museum, N.Y. State Division of Military and Naval

Affairs, 330 Old Niskayuna, Latham, N.Y. 12110.

## *95th N.Y. Flag The First To Get Restored*

The flag of the 95th N.Y. Infantry will help launch New York's effort to preserve its 1000 Civil War flags.

Lance Ingmire, director of the flag project for the Capital District Civil War Round Table, is a great-great grandson of a 95th veteran. In the course of writing a history of the regiment he convinced a state assemblyman to appropriate \$3000 to conserve the flag. Now Ingmire is joining forces with Tom Duclos curator of New York State's military-history collection, to photograph and videotape the entire process, using the banner to raise public awareness and support for the rest of the collection.

"It's an absolute crying shame, the state some of these flags are in," Ingmire says. Ingmire, an insurance agent in Rochester, envisions a public-private fund-raising effort, with the state chipping in matching funds and the rest raised through such initiatives as selling honorary square inches of flags. Another option is publishing a picture book of New York's flags and selling it to raise funds to conserve them, as the commonwealth of Pennsylvania has done.

"Our hope is to get this in the public eye," says Ingmire. He and Duclos appeared recently on local television describing their project with the 95th flag. Textile conservator Fonda Thomson in Sharpsburg, Md., will do the restoration.

More information on the flag project may be obtained by calling Duclos at (518) 436-0218.

[Story update: restoration of the 95th flag has been completed, including a chemical analysis. Unfortunately, the analysis failed to turn up anything of interest, e.g., traces of blood, gunpowder, etc.]

Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly at the Bethlehem Public Library in Delmar, New York. This newsletter is published ten times per year. Annual dues are \$15. 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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To join or renew membership, send \$15 to the CDCWRT address below.

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### The Officers

Chairman	Michael Barrett
Vice-Chairman	Richard Becker
Treasurer	Mark Silo
Secretary	Sue Knost
At-Large	Robert Johnson
At-Large	Dan Lorello

### The Troops

Programs	Michael Russert
Newsletter	Robert Johnson
Preservation	Richard Becker
Field Trips	Mark Silo, Kathy Silo
Banquets	Michael Aikey, Kathy Silo
Refreshments	Jack Lancto
Nominations	Jack Lancto
Membership	Kathy Silo, Russ Denegar
Video Library	James Carey

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