

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212
www.cdcwrt.net



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14th Brooklyn – Red Legged Devils



Pictured above is the 14th Brooklyn, also known as the 14th New York State Militia, was mustered into service on May 23, 1861 for three years of service. This courageous unit fought at First and Second Bull Run, Antietam Creek, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness and Spotsylvania. They were nicknamed the "red-legged devils" by "Stonewall" Jackson. After First Bull Run, the unit was redesignated the 84th New York Volunteers, but they continued to be called the 14th Brooklyn.

OCTOBER MEETING
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2014

WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

BROOKLYN
AND
THE CIVIL WAR

E. A. LIVINGSTON

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 – 7:15 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:15 – 7:45 p.m.**
Discussion	**7:45 - -8:15 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

The October meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will occur on Friday, October 10, 2014 at the Watervliet Senior Center. Our special guest speaker will be historian and author, E.A. (Bud) Livingston. The title of his presentation is **"Brooklyn and the Civil War."**

During the Civil War, Brooklyn was America's third largest city. "Bud" Livingston will weave a fascinating tale of how Brooklyn changed the history of naval warfare forever; where Henry Ward Beecher "auctioned off" slaves at the Plymouth Church; where Walt Whitman reported news about the war in a Brooklyn newspaper; where Robert E Lee's son was an inmate in a prison camp; where a Confederate general became a justice on New York state's Supreme Court. He will also talk about some of the city's famous residents and visitors such as George W. Goethals, Elias Howe Jr., John Wilkes Booth, Tom Thumb, Charles Pfizer and Edward Squibb. And the BROOKLYN DODGERS!

Bud of course was born in Brooklyn, attended Brooklyn College and has a Masters in History from Queens College. He is a past president of the CWRT of New York, and has delivered well over 400 lectures on a variety of Civil War topics, and has taught at Hofstra University and Hunter College. Bud authored a book, **Brooklyn and the Civil War, (2012) and an extensive article in Blue and Gray magazine in 1996. He is an avid baseball fan and has lectured about the Dodgers, Jackie Robinson, Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio.**

EDITORIAL

As editor, I have not only put together each newsletter since December 1999, but on some occasions I have expressed my own personal views. I choose to do this again in this newsletter. These are not necessarily the views of your officers and board.

Over the past several years, there has been a steady decline in our RT: **not** in program quality or website or board participation, but rather in membership participation. Attendance at meetings has declined from the 60-70 in the 1990s to the 25-35 range in2010-2014. I have spoken about this in the past, and it is a problem faced by many voluntary clubs.

I realize that I am an outlier. I am passionate about the Civil War. But I was also passionate about my practice as a pediatric cardiologist who was on call every 4th night and 4th weekend. Yet I made time for 14 years as editor, 4 years as president and regularly attended most meetings and postal cancellation events for the RT. And I still created time for my family and my home, and even mowed my lawn with a walk-behind mover. Therefore I am mystified by non-participation.

Voluntary participation in an activity means that you support that activity, and that support can be expressed in many forms: attending meetings, buying a raffle ticket, buying a book or cachet, baking cookies for the meeting, attending our round table's conferences. We have taken surveys in the past to see what our membership desires, and have tried to meet those requests. Most do not want to talk about detailed, small unit actions during a particular battle. Most prefer general, broad topics, especially the lesser discussed topics about which most of us know only a little. Therefore we learn new information. September's presentation was an excellent example of this.

We are in the 4th year of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War. We will only experience this once. Most of our members will **not** be around to experience the bicentennial. In order to commemorate the 150th anniversary and the efforts of some round table officers in the past, the board decided to sponsor a yearly conference during the sesquicentennial.

Local interest in the Civil War has been spotty at best. That small-town newspaper, *The Washington Post,* had a 12-page insert on Grant taking command in April, an article on black soldiers in the Confederate army in August, and 10-page insert on Sherman's march to the sea in September. Publicity like this, stokes our interest in the Civil War. But our local papers uncommonly have a related article, perhaps because we are so far removed from the site of action.

Your round table has presented 3 annual conferences at 3 sites (Saratoga, Siena College and NYS Museum) with excellent presenters, dealing with interesting topics that rarely have been presented…and at a low cost. For those who desire "traditional" discussions of battles, there have been a myriad of national conferences with registration fees that dwarf our total fee…and you can add to that travel, meals and hotel!!! Yet in my estimation, attendance has been POOR.

Now I have heard the host of excuses: the **Economy** (sorry, we were on the up-swing by 2011, the first year of the 150th, and there is no excuse if you own an I-phone or have HBO); **busy weekends** (sorry, most can get free one Friday night and Saturday and you can forgo one apple-picking or college football game); **limited income** (sorry, see excuse one above, and since you have known about this for an entire year, if you had put $10 a month aside, you would have saved enough money for the conference); **not interested** (re-read this editorial).

As of the time of this editorial, only 17 people have confirmed conference attendance. If attendance is less than last year, what does this mean for the future? The board may need to cancel next year's conference. Cachet sales are down significantly (kids do not collect stamps anymore, just selfies) and those of us who work these events for the RT are getting older (I'm 72). The round table may need to reduce Gettysburg cancel events to every 5th year. With reduced interest in cachets and reduced revenues from cachets, there is less for preservation. It also means we will need to pay for future speakers, since many of our speakers have not requested honoraria or expenses in the past because they appreciate our preservation work.

If this occurs, we may dwindle down to 6 meetings a year, with 20 or less in attendance, and with an occasional book raffle or guest speaker. Don't think it will happen? Several years ago one of the large Washington, DC round tables folded after no one volunteered to run for president, program chair and treasurer…a lack of participation.

I am done ranting now. If you want to embarrass me, then let's have more than 50 attendees at this year's conference. Show me you can make time!

There! I have thrown down the gauntlet.