

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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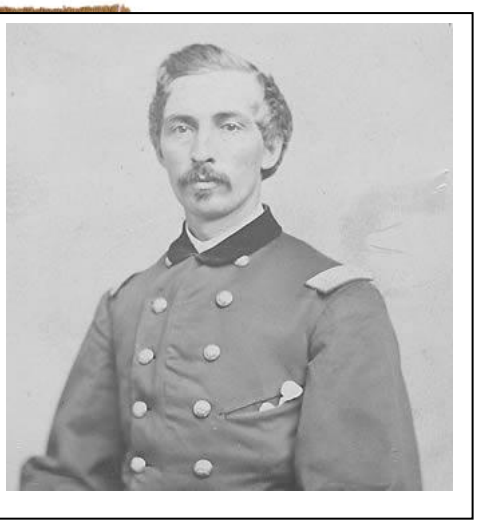
5th NEW YORK CAVALRY
FIRST IRA HARRIS GUARD







In July 1861 the Army authorized the recruitment of a regiment of cavalry, later called the 1st Ira Harris Guard after New York Senator Ira Harris from Albany, NY. The regiment was mustered in service for three years on October 1, 1861 with the strength of 1064 men. Its commander was Col. John Hammond of Crown Point, NY, pictured above. By June of 1863, the 5th Cavalry was in the 1st Brigade (BG Elon Farnsworth), 3rd Division (BG Judson Kilpatrick), Cavalry Corps (MG Alfred Pleasanton).

In the Gettysburg Campaign, the regiment was involved in actions on June 30, 1863 at Hanover, PA. Union Cavalry engaged portions of J.E.B. Stuart's Cavalry Corps.

Phisterer's *New York in the War of the Rebellion* lists casualties of 13 officers and 307 enlisted men for the regiment.

MAY MEETING
FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2012
WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER
1541 BROADWAY
WATERVLIET, NY

The 5th New York Cavalry & the 1st Vermont Cavalry

Joseph Collea

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 – 7:30 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:30 – 8:30 p.m.**
Questions & Answers	**8:30 – 9:00 p.m.**
More Socializing	**9:00 – 10:00 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

The May meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be held on Friday, May 11, 2012. This meeting will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center, 1541 Broadway in Watervliet. Our guest speaker will be Joseph Collea who will speak about the 5th New York Cavalry. His talk is entitled **"Worthy Adversaries: the 5th New York and the 1st Vermont versus Mosby's Rangers."**

Two solid cavalry regiments from neighboring states spent five months between January and June of 1863 battling with the newly-formed partisan rangers of John Singleton Mosby. Much of the foundation of the "Gray Ghost's" early fame came at the expense of these two Union regiments. However, they persevered…. And learned….until they were finally able to get the best of Mosby, earning his respect and praises in the process.

A native of Ilion, NY, Joe has been in public education for the past 43 years, the first 14 years as a history teacher, and the last 29 as an administrator. Currently he is in his eighth year as principal of Hartford High School in White River Junction, Vermont. He has received three degrees from SUNY at Albany and has done post-graduate work at Syracuse University and through a Fulbright Scholarship at American University in Cairo.

He served for eleven years on the village board in Ilion, the last six as mayor. His favorite form of community service now is as a conductor on the Green Mountain Railroad's "Polar Express" each December.

Joe's interest in the Civil War dates back to his junior high school years, when a teacher introduced him to Bruce Catton's first trilogy. Recently, he had the opportunity to add to his first-hand knowledge by visiting Andersonville, Fort Pulaski, and Fort Sumter during a brief southern swing.

This presentation should dovetail very nicely with the fall CDCWRT trip to Mosby's Confederacy that the round table made several years ago. We visited a number of sites where the Rangers and Union cavalry fought. If you were on that trip, pull out your old pictures and notes and bring them to the meeting.

Pictured below is Mosby during the war.



UP-COMING EVENTS

The following list of up-coming events is provided to help Round Table members plan their long term calendars. These are events that involve our Round Table, especially events that provide opportunities to raise funds for our preservation activities. Some events may change as the year progresses, so members should check the list monthly. Details of Sesquicentennial Civil War events can be found on the web-site: www.nycivilwar150.org.

Sunday, May 6, 2012 marks the Ten Broeck Mansion's Annual Living History Day. The mansion will be open from noon to 4:00 p.m. Various organizations will have exhibits on the grounds. The event is free to the public and members are encouraged to attend. The CDCWRT will be represented.

Saturday and Sunday, June 2-3, 2012 is the Troy Civil War Weekend at the Masonic Temple in Troy. This is an encampment and skirmish with artillery. There are a variety of exhibits and organizations represented. The CDCWRT participates. Volunteers are needed to help man our tent the two days. Contact Matt George.

On Thursday-Saturday, June 7-9, 2012 there will be a conference at the Albany Law School entitled "*Civil War on Trial.*" The conference will deal with legal issues that arose during the Civil War. The Archives Partnership Trust is a sponsor.

Friday, June 8, 2012 will be the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our speaker will be Dennis Gaffney and he will talk about his book, *Civil War Week by Week.*

Saturday, June 9, 2012 the CDCWRT will get culture! Albany Pro Musica, a highly respected choral group, will present a special Civil War music program. They have asked the CDCWRT to help promote this event. More details will follow, but mark it on your calendar now and tell your friends about it.

Friday-Sunday, July 6 – 8, 2012 is the 149th Anniversary Re-enactment in Gettysburg. This year the re-enactment is on the weekend after the actual anniversary date of the battle. The CDCWRT will have sites at the re-enactment and the visitor center for the sale of cachets. Any interested volunteers should contact Matt George.

Friday, August 17th is the CDCWRT picnic. Saturday and Sunday August 18-19,2012 is the Schuyler Flatts Civil War Weekend. Join us for the picnic and activities on the weekend.

Friday, September 14th will be the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our presenter will be Laurence Hauptman. The topic of his presentation will be *"General Wool and the New York City Draft Riots."*

Friday, October 12th will be the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our presenter will be Vicki Weiss, and her topic will be *"Civil War Monuments in New York State."*

Friday – Sunday, November 2-4, 2012 will be the second Sue Knost Memorial Conference entitled "*1862: And the War Came."* Most of our speakers have all confirmed and include Chris Kolakowski, Bruce Eelman, John Hennessy, Frank O'Reilly, Steve Muller and John Quarstein. The conference will occur at the facilities at Siena College.

Friday, December 14th will be the regular holiday meeting of the CDCWRT.

APRIL BOARD MEETING

The April Board Meeting was held on April 16, 2012. The treasurer reported $3122.01 in the

regular checking account and $4415.14 in the preservation account. At the April meeting there were $25.05 in sales and $69 from the book raffle. Membership reported the death of two members: Russ Denegar and George Kleinberger.

The Board approved the purchase of $5000 worth of First Day of Issue cachets for the 149th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg and the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam. If all the ordered cachets are sold, the Round Table would gross over $13,000.

A $250 donation was made to the Gettysburg Foundation for a preservation project. A second $250 donation was made to CWT for the Tom's Brook battlefield, a 17:1 match, in the memory of Russ Denegar who supported the CDCWRT with large donations of books and artwork.

All the speakers for the Fall conference at Siena College are confirmed. Sponsors for the conference are being sought.

APRIL MEETING

Joseph W. Zarzynski's presentation "The Search for the Jefferson Davis: Trader, Slaver, Raider" used power point and film clips to trace the history of what had been an illegal slave trader in antebellum days transformed into an early, and the only successful, Confederate privateer. Built originally in 1853 as the brig *Putnam*, the ship was renamed the *Echo* as a slave trader, its transformation accompanied by different paint colors, and shapes and colors of its sails. Structurally it had to be braced to carry the huge water supplies needed to transport hundreds of captive Africans across the Atlantic. Eventually the ship was stopped in 1858 and 318 recently enslaved Africans were returned to Liberia.

With the outbreak of the Civil War the small US Navy was dispersed in many different areas, leaving the North Atlantic merchant trade relatively unprotected. The *Echo,* by now purchased by a speculator named Hunter who sold shares to investors, was renamed the *Jefferson Davis* after receiving letters of marque .Outfitted like a War of 1812 privateer, the masts and hull were painted black with black French cut sails to disguise it as a foreign ship. It carried both French and English flags. On deck was a long gun plus four smaller guns. A sizable crew was on board, estimated to between 60 and 70 men, the large number needed because some men had to be left on a seized prize to get it back to a southern port.

Running out of Charleston, the *Jefferson Davis* cruised as far north as Massachusetts, taking nine prizes along the way, before swinging south and cutting through the northern Caribbean toward Florida. Deciding to put in at St Augustine, it was necessary to get through the treacherous shoals separating the open water from the harbor. As they waited for a pilot, a storm began brewing forcing the captain into an attempt to "thread the needle" and make a run for it. Unfortunately an error in judgment caused the ship to go aground. Men and cargo were rescued, but the incoming storm battered the *Jefferson Davis* sinking it beneath the waves in the murky waters.

End of story until modern day underwater archeology found the existence of a sailing ship wreck that could possibly be the *Jefferson Davis* near the remains of a steamboat wreck. The second half of Mr. Zarzynski's program detailed the attempts of underwater archeologists to investigate the wreck and to prove whether or not it really is the Confederate privateer. The visibility in the water there is practically zero with 18" at its best. As dives were made, the wreck turned out to be hull rich, but artifact poor. Neither evidence of guns on the decks nor

retrofitting as a slaver was found. After analysis of ballast samples were made by NYS Geologist Bill Kelly, they were determined to be Appalachian rocks that could have originated in a variety of places. Analytical work is still in progress on wood samples.

Sadly no bell, no military buttons or other distinguishing artifacts have been found; no concrete evidence so far that this is actually the *Jefferson Davis*, successful Confederate privateer. Zarzynski, himself an underwater archeologist, was involved in making a documentary in 2009 and 2010 which gave us a real understanding of the work involved in bringing up materials from the wreck and the ongoing investigation to uncover clues as to its identity.

This excellent summary has been provided by Mary Ellen Johnson, Secretary for the CDCWRT.

THE STORY OF PINK

Crown Point, NY is a small picturesque town that is surrounded by historical sites of the French and Indian War and the American Revolutionary War. As you come into the village on route 9J from the northern end, there is a small Veterans' Memorial Park just off the main street. It is surrounded by a typical 19th Century iron fence and contains a number of monuments from different conflicts. The engraved names are local veterans who served their country from the Civil War to the late 20th Century.

The largest monument is from the post-Civil War period. On the monument also engraved are the names of those Civil War battles where local veterans died. There is one spelling mistake that I have heard occurred on other Civil War monuments, perhaps made by the same manufacturer. "Cold Harbor" is listed as "Coal Harbor" on the monument.

In one corner of the small area is a stone marker inscribed as **"Pink."** Below the name is inscribed: "This horse carried his Master 25 years and was never known to show fatigue, while other horses of cavalry and flying artillery were dying from want of food and exhaustion."

I now know that Pink was Col. John Hammond's mount of the 5th New York Cavalry. **Pink** survived 88 skirmishes and 34 major battles, and died of old age. During the Civil War over 1 million horses died.

Pink was a Morgan horse, and written records of individual Morgan horses serving in the Civil War are scarce. Also surviving from the 5th New York Cavalry were Maj. Eugene Hayward's **Mink**, Lt. Barker's **Prince** and Col. James Penfield's **Billy**. Morgan horses were often referred to as "Billies" by troops of this era.

The boys of the 5th NY Cavalry had Capt. John Hammond's father hand pick and pay extra charge over the government allowance for their purebred Morgan mounts. Hammond was also a Morgan breeder. While not large in stature, Morgans had thriftiness and hardiness in their favor. By the fall of 1862, ten thousand Vermont Morgans had been sent to the war. More followed and most never returned. Of the original 1200 Morgans in the 1st Vermont Cavalry, only 200 survived the war.

Most were lost to disease, famine or injury. Many were lost due to the basic ignorance of the raw recruit who simply did not know the basic fundamentals of horse care. Colic claimed far more horses of the Northern troops than actual battle fatalities. The experience horsemen of the South had a decided advantage by knowing how to care for their horses. The South was quickly drained of horseflesh after the Union captured large areas of the big horse breeding states of Kentucky and Virginia. Lee pointed out most poignantly at the Appomattox surrender that the only horses the South had were being ridden by his troops.

CIVIL WAR DEATHS—NEW DATA

For 110 years, the numbers stood as gospel: 618,222 men died in the Civil War, 360,222 from the North and 258,000 from the South — by far the greatest toll of any war in American history. But new research shows that the numbers were far too low. By combing through newly digitized census data from the 19th century, J. David Hacker, a demographic historian from Binghamton University in New York, has recalculated the death toll and increased it by more than 20 percent — to 750,000.

The new figure is already winning acceptance from scholars. Civil War History, the journal that published Dr. Hacker's paper, called it "among the most consequential pieces ever to appear" in its pages. And a pre-eminent authority on the era, Eric Foner, a historian at Columbia University, said: "It even further elevates the significance of the Civil War and makes a dramatic statement about how the war is a central moment in American history. It helps you understand, particularly in the South with a much smaller population, what a devastating experience this was."

The old figure dates back well over a century, the work of two Union Army veterans who were passionate amateur historians: William F. Fox and Thomas Leonard Livermore. Fox, who had fought at Antietam, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, knew well the horrors of the Civil War. He did his research the hard way, reading every muster list, battlefield report and pension record he could find. In his 1889 treatise "Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865," Fox presented an immense mass of information. Besides the aggregate death count, researchers could learn that Gettysburg and Waterloo were almost equivalent battles, with each of the four combatant armies suffering about 23,000 casualties; that the Union Army had 166 regiments of black troops; and that the average Union soldier was 5 feet 8 1/4 inches tall and weighed 143 1/2 pounds. Fox's estimate of Confederate battlefield deaths was much rougher, however: a "round number" of 94,000, a figure compiled from after-action reports.

In 1900, Livermore set out to make a more complete count. In his book, "Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861-65," he reasoned that if the Confederates had lost proportionally the same number of soldiers to disease as the Union had, the actual number of Confederate dead should rise to 258,000. And that was that. The Fox-Livermore numbers continued to be cited well into the 21st century, even though few historians were satisfied with them.

Enter Dr. Hacker, a specialist in 19th-century demographics, who was accustomed to using a system called the two-census method to calculate mortality. That method compares the number of 20-to-30-year-olds in one census with the number of 30-to-40-year-olds in the next census, 10 years later. The difference in the two figures is the number of people who died in that age group. Pretty simple — but, Dr. Hacker soon realized, too simple for counting Civil War dead. Published census data from the era did not differentiate between native-born Americans and immigrants; about 500,000 foreign-born soldiers served in the Union Army alone. "If you have a lot of immigrants age 20 moving in during one decade, it looks like negative mortality 10 years later," Dr. Hacker said. While the Census Bureau in 1860 asked people their birthplace, the information never made it into the printed report.

As for Livermore's assumption that deaths from disease could be correlated with battlefield deaths, Dr. Hacker found that wanting too. The Union had better medical care, food and shelter, especially in the war's final years,

suggesting that Southern losses to disease were probably much higher. Also, research has shown that soldiers from rural areas were more susceptible to disease and died at a higher rate than city dwellers. The Confederate Army had a higher percentage of farm boys.

Dr. Hacker said he realized in 2010 that a rigorous recalculation could finally be made if he used newly available detailed census data presented on the Internet by the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota. The center's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series had put representative samples of in-depth, sortable information for individuals counted in 19th-century censuses. This meant that by sorting by place of birth, Dr. Hacker could count only the native-born.

Another hurdle was what Dr. Hacker called the "dreadful" 1870 census, a badly handled undercount taken when the ashes of the war were still warm. But he reasoned a way around that problem. Because the census takers would quite likely have missed as many women as men, he decided to look at the ratio of male to female deaths in 1870. Next, he examined mortality figures from the decades on either side of the war — the 1850s and 1870s — so that he could get an idea of the "normal" ratio of male to female deaths for a given decade. When he compared those ratios to that of 1860-70, he reasoned, he would see a dramatic spike in male mortality. And he did. Subtracting normal attrition from the male side of the equation left him with a rough estimate of war dead.

It was a better estimate than Fox and Livermore had produced, but Dr. Hacker made it clear that his was not the final answer. He had made several assumptions, each of which stole accuracy from the final result. Among them: that the expected normal mortality rate in the 1860s would be the average of the rates in the 1850s and 1870s; that foreign soldiers died at the same rate as native-born soldiers; and that the War Department figure of 36,000 black war dead had to be accepted as accurate because black women suffered so terribly both during and after the war that they could not be used as a control for male mortality.

The study had two significant shortcomings. Dr. Hacker could make no estimate of civilian deaths, an enduring question among historians, "because the overall number is too small relative to the overall number of soldiers killed." And he could not tell how many of the battlefield dead belonged to each side. "You could assume that everyone born in the Deep South fought for the Confederacy and everyone born in the North fought for the Union," he said. "But the border states were a nightmare, and my confidence in the results broke down quickly."

With all the uncertainties, Dr. Hacker said, the data suggested that 650,000 to 850,000 men died as a result of the war; he chose the midpoint as his estimate. He emphasized that his methodology was far from perfect. "Part of me thinks it is just a curiosity," he said of the new estimate. "But wars have profound economic, demographic and social costs," he went on. "We're seeing at least 37,000 more widows here, and 90,000 more orphans. That's a profound social impact, and it's our duty to get it right."

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On line commentary by Guy Gugliotta
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