



# Bugle Calls



## SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume 17 Number 6

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### SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings fellow Civil War enthusiasts. Although we have no regular meetings until September 10 when Fred Bohmfalk will speak to us about Baseball during the Civil War, members and friends of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table will gather for a picnic and conversation at the mountain home of Dr. and Linda Clague. This is the 3rd year in which the Clagues have invited us to escape the heat of the Valley and enjoy the relative "chill" of the mountain air. We are pleased to accept their kind invitation to do so on Saturday, July 11th and starting time is around 3 PM until 8 PM; arrive sooner if you want to explore the town of Shaver Lake or visit the museum there.

**What to bring?** If your last name begins with A-L bring a dessert or an appetizer; N-Z can bring a salad or main dish. The Clague's will provide the tri-tip and drinks.

**Directions:** drive through the town of Shaver and as you leave Shaver the last business is Ken's Market. The Clague's retreat is a mile from there on the left at the gate entrance to Rock Haven. Pass through the gate and follow the balloons or signs to Brian and Linda's. If you get lost call: 841-7161 or 281-4953.

In fact, Brian writes: "One can 'bring a friend' providing for their sustenance. The gate will be open! Members can come earlier, i.e. noon, if they want to take a hike, play volleyball, etc. We are there all day and always happy to entertain our friendly club members." There may be a short talk after dinner by Michael Green.

**I hope that you will be able to attend this premiere event.**

David D

### Last Reminder

The SJVCWRT must have an e-mail address for all members wishing to receive the *Bugle Calls*. We will no longer mail a paper copy of the newsletter beginning July 1. If you do not have e-mail and wish to continue to receive the newsletter by mail, please notify Editor Bob Quist in writing before then so that we can continue to mail your *Bugle Calls*.

All members will continue to receive the newsletter once they are posted monthly on our website at:

<http://sjvcwrt.com>

### Another Reminder

We will have no monthly meetings during June, July, and August except for our July BBQ Potluck on July 11th. Please RSVP with Treasurer Walt Schulze via his e-mail at: [wschulze1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wschulze1@sbcglobal.net) or with a phone call at 297-4481.

## Book Review:

### 'Looking Back' by Emmet Cozier published in 1956 on 'Bohemian Brigades' [early reporters] of the Civil War

#### Review by Dr. Brian Clague

My review is of an older book: this is one example of many fine works on the Bohemian Brigades, the affectionate term used to describe early reporters. 'Looking Back' was published in 1956 by Emmet Cozier by Oxford Univ. Press. I reread this book spurred by the Thursday evening discussion held at our Club Dinner at the end of May.

This book follows the course and major events of the war as seen through action by a half dozen reporters from the major newspapers of the time. The themes are: reporter personalities and styles; effort by both governments to balance the need for societal news and the necessary leaking of important information about the condition of armies after each major engagement; the particular censorship efforts by major generals of the North; the individual heroism of reporters who faced enemy fire to get the battle reports and their struggles to get that information back through both government censors and enemy patrols to the awaiting printing pressmen; the eventual decision by Lincoln's administration to end its dependence on inefficient and often unreliable military reports to keep them abreast of events leading them to establish their own reporting systems; the role of bribes in releasing news; the role newspaper reports had on understanding the real events which occurred in several battles, especially Chancellorsville, early events in Missouri, the Overland campaign. This book is filled with many unexpected insights as it shows the gradual development of the role of immediate news releases.

## SJVCWRT MEETING OF 5/28/09

By Ron Vaughan

Treasurer Walt Schulze reported a balance of \$4230.

- Our traditional July Barbecue will be July 11th at the Clague's mountain home.
- Beginning September we will meet the second Thursday of the month.
- Proposed Club Constitutional changes and amendments were approved by unanimous vote.

PROGRAM: Shaun Ardemagni presented a DVD of a CSPAN interview with James Perry (retired news reporter) author of **A Bohemian Brigade** about Civil War correspondents. The war was extensively covered by numerous and very competitive newspapers. New York City alone had 18 daily newspapers. Some of these were only four pages and others up to 20. They did not have the technology to publish photos, only lithographs and drawings. There were about 200 Northern reporters and 50 to 75 in the South. One reason for this is that in some cases paper was in short supply in the South and it was in demand for cartridge papers, and the lead type was needed for bullets. More importantly, there were only about 1,000 miles of telegraph wire in the South, compared to 15,000 miles in the North, and this was expanded as the Union armies advanced. Even in the North, often times, reporters had to ride for miles to a telegraph station, to send their stories. Some Southern newspapers were captured. The Memphis Appeal had to move around the South to keep publishing.

Most of the reporters were young college graduates. There were no women reporters, but there was one Black reporter, Thomas Chester. A few were celebrities: Horace Greeley of the N.Y. Tribune, Henry Raymond of the N.Y. Times, and James G. Bennett of the N.Y. Herald. Only George Townsend seemed to focus on making money, as he made a large income from speaking on lecture circuits. The smart reporters would hang around the general's tent, to see what information they could learn. Newspaper men were disliked by many generals, as their publications could be read by the enemy. Also, some were very critical of generalship. Sherman put Thomas Knox on trial for calling him "insane". Grant and Meade both hated reporters. Two reporters were captured by Confederates and treated the same as soldier prisoners.

The editors were hungry for news. One editor wrote to his correspondent, "Telegraph all the news you can send, and when there is no news, send rumors." Two reporters took this a step farther, they missed out on a battle, so sitting in their hotel room, they made a battle report!

## Blue Fridays: Will You Wear Blue??

Very soon, you will see a great many people wearing blue every Friday. The reason? Americans who support our troops used to be called the 'silent majority'. We are no longer silent, and are voicing our love for God, country and home in record breaking numbers. We are not organized, boisterous or overbearing.

Many Americans, like you, me and all our friends, simply want to recognize that the vast majority of America supports our troops. Our idea of showing solidarity and support for our troops with dignity and respect starts this Friday -- and continues each and every Friday until the troops all come home, sending a deafening message that every red-blooded American who supports our men and women afar, will wear something blue. By word of mouth, press, TV -- let's make the United States on every Friday a sea of blue much like a homecoming football game in the bleachers. If every one of us who loves this country will share this with acquaintances, coworkers, friends, and family, it will not be long before the USA is covered in BLUE and it will let our troops know the once 'silent' majority is on their side more than ever, certainly more than the media lets on. The first thing a soldier says when asked 'What can we do to make things better for you?' is 'We need your support and your prayers.' Let's get the word out and lead with class and dignity, by example, and wear something blue every Friday.

# Summer Civil War Readings

by Evan Jones

Folks have been asking "What are the best studies to read in preparation for October's symposium?"

If I were to recommend only one book, the choice is easy: **Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns**, authored by our keynote speaker, Professor Steven Woodworth. This work represents the best single volume history of the campaign ever written.

For a more in-depth look at the later half of the campaign, our speaker, Wiley Sword's, **Mountains Touched With Fire: Chattanooga Besieged** offers a capacious narrative of the battles to follow Chickamauga. For the best scholarship on the first half of the campaign we will all have to wait for our speaker Dr. William Glenn Robertson's **River of Death: The Campaign of Chickamauga** to be completed and published (Chapel Hill Press). Impressive previews of this work, however, have been printed in a series of five recent **Blue & Gray Magazine** volumes.

Collectively these three authors offer the most balanced and honest scholarship on the campaign to date. I might humbly suggest that we familiarize ourselves with their work this summer, that we can galvanize further meaning during our time with these scholars in October.

Have a good summer.  
Evan Jones

## Calling All Ladies with Lineal Decent of Union Civil War Veterans

Daughters of Union Veteran's Tent that is forming here in Central Valley. This organization is for ladies with lineal decent from a Union Civil War Soldier.

I found some interesting information on one of the members of the original Tent in Fresno, Ida Saxton McKinley Tent #8. She was Lavina Jane Zimmerman. She became the CA-NV Dept Daughters of Union Veterans President in 1918. Her father was Jacob Bechtel. He fought in the battle of Gettysburg where he wrote his girlfriend everyday from the battlefield. The single largest collection of Civil War artifacts/memorabilia at the National Museum in Gettysburg is from Jacob Bechtel and his family, including GAR, WRC, DUV and SUV badges and ribbons, along with part of Jacob's uniform and his letters. My niece and nephew, whom I am raising are descendant of Jacob Bechtel.

Judy Weaver of Visalia For more information: [judyw@our-folks.com](mailto:judyw@our-folks.com)

The June issue of *Bugle Calls* is now available for your viewing on our website:

<http://sjvcwrt.com>. Enjoy  
Webmaster Walt Schulze

**Amendments or by-laws** proposed in a previous newsletter were voted on and approved by the general membership at the May 28 meeting by unanimous vote. The new constitution is printed in full in this issue.

## The Origins of 'Taps'

Here is something every American should know. Until I read this, I didn't know, but understand it's true.

We in the United States have all heard the haunting song, "Taps." It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually brings tears to our eyes. But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted and the haunting melody, we now know as "Taps" used at military funerals was born.

## The Remaining 2009 Meeting Schedule

Saturday, July 11: Annual potluck/picnic, at the Clagues at Shaver Lake. Bring a friend!

Thursday, September 10. Fred Bohmfalk. "Baseball during the Civil War"

Thursday, October 8. Ginny and Tim Karlberg. "The California 100 in Fact and Legend".

Friday, October 2 to Sunday, October 4. The Civil War Revisited: Fresno's Kearney Park

Friday, October 23 to Sunday, October 25. 25th Annual Civil War Conference. "**The Campaigns for Chattanooga**". Clovis Veterans Memorial Building.

Thursday, November 12. Mary Townsend. My great-great-grandfather Major General Peter Osterhaus.

Thursday, December 10. Christmas Party.

'A Field Guide to Civil War sites at or near Chattanooga' is featured on pages 24-25 of the August 2009 issue of **Civil War Times**. If you pick up a copy also note that our Chattanooga Conference in October is advertised in the middle of the next to last page (p.73). The ad isn't large but its placement does draw one's eyes."

David D

## SJVCWRT Hosting 25th Annual West Coast Conference

Evan Jones has lined up noted speakers and Park Rangers to come to Fresno-Clovis on **October 23-25, 2009** at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building to examine '**The Campaign for Chattanooga**'. The conference line-up of speakers include:

**Steven Woodworth** - [Keynote Speaker]  
Professor, Texas Christian University

**James Ogden** - Chief Historian, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

**Glenn Robertson** - Director, Combat Studies Institute, Ft. Leavenworth

**James Stanbery** - Professor, Los Angeles Harbor College

**Wiley Sword** - Author/Historian

**Lee White** - Park Ranger, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

**Chris Young** - Former Park Ranger, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

**Evan Jones** - Former Park Ranger, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

Plan now to attend the 25th West Coast Conference in 2009. Registration and more details can be obtained at the conference web site at

**[www.chattanooga2009.com](http://www.chattanooga2009.com)**

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**Fresno CA 93755**

**Website: <http://SJVCWRT.com>**

