

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

January 12, 2019
Our 215th Meeting



Volume 19
Number 1

<http://www.raleighcwrt.org>

Jan. 12 Event Features Ed Bearss Speaking on “The Siege of Vicksburg”

Our upcoming meeting will be on Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 12:30 pm in Daniels Auditorium of the NC Museum of History in Raleigh. This is our annual "big" meeting and will feature Ed Bearss speaking on “The Siege of Vicksburg” (starting at 1:00 pm). The 2019 T. Harry Gattton Award winner will also be announced. Admission is \$10 for this meeting as it is a fundraiser for our projects. No advance registration is necessary.

Edwin C. Bearss is one of the most respected Civil War scholars alive today and is considered by many to be a national treasure.



Ed served as Chief Historian of the National Park Service and was featured in Ken Burns' PBS series, *The Civil War*, as well as Arts & Entertainment Channel's *Civil War Journal*.

He is an award-winning author, having written or edited more than 20 books in addition to more than 100 articles. Among

his many works are *The Battle at Wilson's Creek*, *Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads*, *Hardluck Ironclad*, and *The Vicksburg Campaign*. Ed also provides the overview in the Raleigh Civil War Round Table's documentary film on the 1865 events in NC.

In 1983, Ed received the Department of Interior's Distinguished Service Award, its highest honor. Ed also was the first recipient of Civil War Preservation Trust's most prestigious national award, which is now named after him. In November 2005, he was identified in *Smithsonian Magazine's* cover story, “35 who made a difference.”

In 2008, the Raleigh CWRT awarded Ed our first T. Harry Gattton Award for “his tireless efforts in support of the preservation of countless Civil War battlefields and the memory of those who fought and died on them.”

Ed served in the Pacific theater with the Marine Corps during World War II, and was severely wounded by machine-gun fire.

Ed's topic at our January meeting is especially appropriate because Ed began his National Park Service career as an historian at the Vicksburg National Military Park in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

At Vicksburg, Ed did the research leading him and two friends to the long-lost Union gunboat U.S.S. Cairo. He was promoted in 1958 to Southeast regional historian, working out of Vicksburg. He served as Chief Historian of the National Park Service from 1981 to 1994 and is currently Chief Historian Emeritus.

The Story of the USS Cairo

The U.S.S. Cairo was one of seven ironclad gunboats named in honor of towns along the upper Mississippi and Ohio rivers. They were built by river engineer James B. Eads, whose bridge over the Mississippi River at St. Louis is still in use to this day. Cairo was constructed at Mound City, Illinois, and commissioned in January 1862.

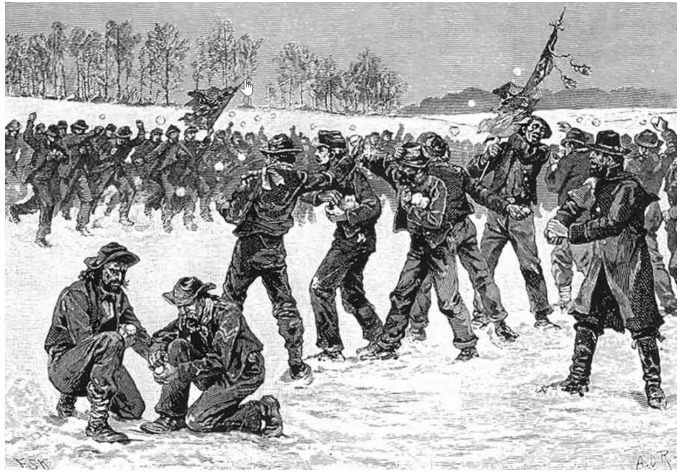


On Dec. 12, 1862, while conducting operations on the Yazoo River 7 miles north of Vicksburg, the Cairo's hull was breached by two explosions. It sank (with no loss of life) within twelve minutes, becoming the first ship in history to be sunk by an electrically-detonated torpedo.

From the study of contemporary documents and maps and using a pocket compass and iron probes, Ed Bearss, assisted by Don Jacks and Warren Grabau, located the vessel in 1956. It was raised in three sections in 1964. Over the next eight years, it was cleaned and restored. It was transported to Vicksburg in 1977 and partially reconstructed on a concrete foundation near the Vicksburg National Cemetery. It and its restored artifacts can be seen at the USS Cairo Museum.

See <https://www.nps.gov/vick/u-s-s-cairo-gunboat.htm>.

Snowball Wars



Because there was relatively little fighting during the dead of winter during the Civil War, both Union and Confederate soldiers participated in snowball fights amongst themselves to relieve winter boredom. Soldier's diaries show four memorable fights within the Confederate ranks but only one within the Union flanks. This may have been because snow was more of a novelty among southern soldiers.

On the Confederate side, troops from Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Virginia and North Carolina battled nobly. On Jan. 28, 1863, a large encampment of Confederate troops in Virginia's Rappahannock Valley received two feet of snow. On the 29th, a snowball fight broke out between several Texas regiments. The fighting "snowballed" until over 9,000 combatants were involved. Because many soldiers sustained slight injuries, it was reported that General James Longstreet banned future snowball fighting among his troops.

Another noted snowball fight took place between Confederate troops near Rappahannock Academy in the vicinity of Fredericksburg, Va., on Feb. 25, 1863. Diaries show that 8 inches of snow fell on Feb. 19. Two days later, 9 more inches of snow fell. On Feb. 25, 1863, the troops were greeted with sunny skies and milder temperatures. The snow on the ground softened until the ideal conditions for snowball-making prompted the encamped soldiers to act. Participants say some 10,000 men were engaged.

Gen. Robert F. Hoke's North Carolina soldiers marched toward Col. W.H. Stiles' camp of Georgians. The attacking force was comprised of infantry, cavalry and skirmishers. The fight began with a "severe pelting" of snowballs. Reinforcements from the commissary rushed to assist the brigade under attack. History does not record who won.

In one of the few Union engagements of note, troops of the Third & Fourth Vermont fought the Twenty-sixth New Jersey. This led to numerous black eyes and bloody noses but, as in the case of the Confederate battles, was good for morale.

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Upcoming Events

Jan. 9, 2019. 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. Ed Bearss on "Reflections on the Civil War"

The Brunswick Civil War Round Table is sponsoring a free lecture by Ed Bearss, National Park Historian Emeritus. Ed's talk is entitled "Reflections on the Civil War".

The event will be held in Ft. Caswell's Hatch Auditorium, Baptist Assembly, Caswell Beach, NC on the eastern tip of Oak Island. Registration begins at 6:15 pm. The program starts at 7:00 pm. This event is free and open to the public.

Jan. 10, 2019. 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm. Ed Bearss on "Ask Ed Bearss"

The Rufus Barringer Civil War Round Table is sponsoring a free lecture by Ed Bearss, National Park Historian Emeritus. Ed's talk is entitled "Ask Ed Bearss".

The event will be held at the Civic Club, Pennsylvania & Ashe, Southern Pines, NC. A social "hour" begins at 6:00 pm with the program to follow at 7:15 pm. This event is free and open to the public.

Jan. 11, 2019. 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Ed Bearss on "The Heritage of North Carolina at Gettysburg"

The Edgecombe Community College History Department and the William Dorsey Pender Civil War Roundtable is sponsoring a free lecture by Ed Bearss, National Park Historian Emeritus, at the college. Ed will relate "The Heritage of North Carolina at Gettysburg".

The event will be held in the Mobley Atrium of the Thomas Fleming Bldg. on the Tarboro, NC campus. Students and the public are invited to attend the free lecture, which will begin at 7:30 p.m.

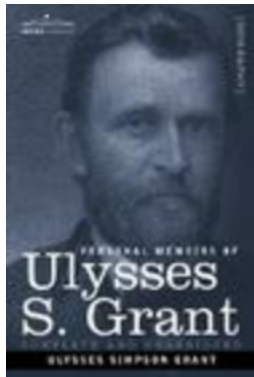
A 6:30 pm dinner in Ed's honor will precede the lecture. The cost of the dinner is \$14. Reservations are requested for those who plan to attend the dinner. To make reservations, please contact either [Monika Fleming at flemingm@edgecombe.edu](mailto:Monika.Fleming@edgecombe.edu) or klautzen14@gmail.com by January 3, 2019.

Jan. 12, 2019. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. "And How We Suffered..." -- the 154th Commemoration of the Second Battle of Fort Fisher. Fort Fisher State Historic Site, 1610 Fort Fisher Blvd., South Kure Beach, NC.

The 154th commemoration of the Second Battle of Fort Fisher will focus on the stories of those individuals impressed by the Confederate War Department and Engineer Bureau to build Fort Fisher and the Cape Fear defenses. Outside the museum, reenactors will bring the Fort to life. Infantry units will be on hand to talk with visitors about camp life and garrison duty as they drill and conduct the manual of arms. There will also be artillery demonstrations. This event is open to the public and the cost is free but donations are appreciated. For more information, contact John Moseley at john.moseley@ncdcr.gov or phone (910) 251-7342.

Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant

At the conclusion of his second term in office as President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia, took a trip around the world in 1877. This left him



short on money. So, the Grants moved to New York City in 1878 and he went into business with his son Ulysses S. Grant, Jr. and Ferdinand Ward, a young investor. With Ward's skills and Grant's name, the investment firm did well at first. Family members and friends poured money into the firm. But, to his undoing, Grant was disengaged with the business and often signed documents without reading them. This may explain why Grant was unaware that Ward had used the firm as a Ponzi scheme.

When the pyramid collapsed, Ward absconded with the money, leaving Grant bankrupt, his family penniless, and his reputation in tatters.

On top of that, six months later he was diagnosed with terminal throat cancer with but a year left to live. In order to rescue his family's finances and reputation, Grant followed the one course open to him: he wrote his memoirs. In spite of the terrible pain he suffered every day, and working against a literal drop-dead deadline, he wrote at a furious pace, completing his 2-volume memoirs 5 days before he died.



Before starting to write his memoirs, Grant had come to an arrangement with Mark Twain to be his publisher. Twain created a unique marketing system designed to reach millions of veterans with a patriotic appeal just as Grant's death was being mourned. Ten thousand agents canvassed the North, following a script that Twain had devised; many were veterans who dressed in their old uniforms. They sold 350,000 two-volume sets at prices from \$3.50 to \$12, depending on the binding (roughly \$100 to \$330 in today's terms). Each copy contained what looked like a handwritten note from Grant himself.

In the end, Grant's widow, Julia, received about \$450,000. In present day terms, this is equivalent to \$12.4 million. Grant had rescued his family's finances and reputation and his effort was hailed by such luminaries as Mark Twain, Gertrude Stein, Henry James, and Edmund Wilson as great literature. Countless presidents, including Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, credit Grant with influencing their own writing. A model of autobiography to this day, praised for its conciseness and clarity, the "Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant" is an exceptional work of literature, reflecting a man's ultimate concern for the welfare of his country throughout his life.

SBN-13: 9781596059993 (Hardcover). Published by Cosimo Classics, December 27, 2006.

ISBN-13: 9781602069183 (Paperback). Published by Cosimo Classics, November 5, 2007.

Available at Quail Ridge Books, Raleigh, NC, as well as other book stores and online at Amazon.com.

As Grant's memoirs are in the public domain, they are also available online in PDF and other formats:

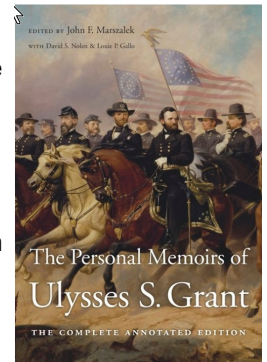
[Personal memoirs of U.S. Grant, Vol I, C. L. Webster, 1885.](#)

[Personal memoirs of U.S. Grant, Vol II, C. L. Webster, 1886.](#)

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The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition

On October 16, 2017, the first completely annotated edition of the memoirs was published by Harvard University Press under the title "**The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition**". The editor is John F. Marszalek, historian and Executive Director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association. He was assisted by Associate Editor David S. Nolen and Assistant Editor Louie P. Gallo and completed the project in order to contextualize the memoirs for the modern reader.



The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition

clarifies the great military leader's thoughts on his life and times through the end of the Civil War and offering his invaluable perspective on battlefield decision making. An introduction contextualizes Grant's life and significance, and lucid editorial commentary allows his voice and narrative to shine through. This definitive edition enriches our understanding of the pre-war years, the war with Mexico, and the Civil War. Grant provides essential insight into how rigorously these events tested America's democratic institutions and the cohesion of its social order.

The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition is a work of profound political, historical, and literary significance. This celebrated annotated edition will introduce a new generation of readers of all backgrounds to an American classic.

SBN-13: 9780674976290 (Hardcopy). Published by Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, October 16, 2017.

ISBN-13: 9780674237858 (Paperback). To be published by Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, June 10, 2019.

Available at Quail Ridge Books, Raleigh, NC, as well as other book stores and online at Amazon.com.

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News of the RCWRT



Upcoming 2019 RCWRT Meetings

Date	Speaker	Topic
Jan. 12	Ed Bearss	Vicksburg Campaign; 2019 T. Harry Gattton Award winner announced
Feb. 11	Susanna Lee	Motivations of the Civil War Soldier
Mar. 11	Harold Knudsen	Modern War Methods of General Longstreet
Apr. 4	Bruce Venter	The Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid on Richmond

Preservation News



Help the American Battlefield Trust in their 2018 projects. There are five battlefields and 317 Acres you can help save today. **Remember, last-minute donations are tax-deductible through December 31, 2018.**

Two of the battlefields are in NC and total 51 acres.

- ♦ **Wilson's Creek, MO** - August 10, 1861 (6 acres)
- ♦ **Rappahannock Station, VA** - Nov. 7, 1863 (201 acres)
- ♦ **Bentonville, NC** - Day One - March 19, 1865
- ♦ **Averasboro, NC** - March 16, 1865
- ♦ **Fort Blakeley, AL** - April 9, 1865 (59 acres)

Generous public and private matching funds will allow all 317 acres to be saved for just \$136,222. That means every \$1.00 you can commit today will be multiplied into \$32.74.

For more information on donating, go to <https://www.battlefields.org/give/save-battlefields/save-317-acres-five-civil-war-battlefields>.

The Raleigh Civil War Round Table was formed on March 12, 2001 and is a 501(c)(3) "tax exempt organization."

We meet on the second Monday of most months at 6:30 pm, at the N.C. Museum of History (located at 5 Edenton Street, across from the State Capitol). The programs begin at 7:00 p.m. Check the RCWRT website (<http://www.raleighcwr.org>) for program dates and timing.

Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$10 for teachers. Student membership is free. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20. Dues should be submitted to the Treasurer by **September 15** each year.



The Knapsack

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(January 2019 Circulation: 299)

Staff

Bob Graesser, Editor

Contributors

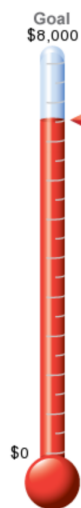
Griff Bartlett

Readers are encouraged to submit photos, events, & articles for publication to Bob Graesser, Editor (bob.graesser@gmail.com; 919-244-9041)

RCWRT Board of Directors (2018-2020)

Name	Position	Phone #	Email Address
Ted Kunstling	President	919-787-5282	trkunstling@aol.com
Adam Medlin	Vice President	919-478-5643	h46thnc@gmail.com
Griff Bartlett	Sec.-Treas.	919-848-6562	griffb@yahoo.com
Jack Milani	Trip Coord.	919-848-3670	1huntmstr@gmail.com
Pattie Smith	Prog. Chair	252-450-5040	rvpls00@yahoo.com
Bob Graesser	Knapsack Ed./ Webmaster	919-244-9041	bob.graesser@gmail.com
John Wood	Member	919-802-7996	john3wood@gmail.com
Beverly Thomas	Member	919-859-4474	bhthomas@nc.rr.com

Paying Memberships / Total Members: 127 / 201



Funding Effort Toward Conservation of Our "Adopted" 30th NC Infantry Regiment's State Flag

As of December 29th, thanks to proceeds from sales of Andrew Ballard's documentary DVD covering the end of the Civil War in North Carolina, plus generous donations from the Raleigh CWRT Board and others, and including proceeds from the raffle at our November meeting, the amount raised remains at \$6,580 (plus one outstanding pledge of \$250) toward the estimated \$7,500 - \$8,000 conservation cost!