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WEBSITE: scottsdalecwrt.vze.com

.Meets @ Civic Center Library

3839 N Drinkwater Blvd Scottsdale

.on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

6:45 PM—8:45 PM

.September thru May

.\$35 Annual Dues (individual)

.\$45 Annual Dues (family)

.Everyone Welcome



FRANK O'REILLY

presents-

The Liberty Hall Volunteers: Stonewall Jackson's College Boys

April 19, 2011 Tuesday

6:45 PM

Civic Center Library

Graduating from Washington and Lee University, Frank A. O'Reilly first worked for the Stonewall Jackson House in Lexington, Va. Joining the National Park Service in 1987 as a temporary historian at the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, he later took a position at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, returning to Fredericksburg in 1990 as historian at the Stonewall Jackson Shrine. Mr. O'Reilly has also served as historical consultant for the City of Fredericksburg and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Planning Commission. He is the author of several articles on the war in Virginia, and of the book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock*, which won the Capital District Book Award in 2002. He continues to conduct extensive battlefield studies and tours throughout Virginia, many for the National Park Service. One week after his visit here, Mr. O'Reilly will be the speaker at the American Civil War Round Table of the United Kingdom, in Oxford, England.

FROM WES' DEN.....All of us understand that the Civil War's 150th anniversary begins April 12th, when Fort Sumter is attacked in Charleston, SC. All CSA secession events have been celebrated with dinners, dances and re-enactments. Mississippi seceded on January 9, 1861. Four days later Mississippi artillery started firing on all northern shipping trying to pass Vicksburg. I was actually shocked to learn that last month. Were these the first shots of the Civil War? The re-enactment was a big success as the riverboat Tyler steamed by in a cloud of smoke. The Vicksburg River Battery was well prepared. For the next four years events will be happening every month. Try and catch a few.



I want you to know that We/SCWRT received a heartfelt letter of thanks from the Civil War Trust, formerly the CW Preservation Trust, President Jim Lighthizer, to let one of "our strongest supporters know how much they mean to us". You are entitled to this commendation by your support of this Round Table. For the third consecutive year we have sent them over \$2500! They, as good stewards, have now acquired 30,000 acres of battlefields. That is 47 square miles, in 20 states. It is estimated that 20% of Civil War battlefields are totally destroyed and only 15% are protected as National Parks. Only one national organization is working to save our battlefield heritage and that is the Civil War Trust. Please sustain this effort. Dues turned in anytime now will cover you thru June 1, 2012. It will even save us sending you a bill. I remain your most obedient servant..... *Wes Schmidt*

“FIX BAYONETS”

by

Tom Lannon
SCWRT member

On July 2, 1863 Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and men of the 20th Maine were assigned a position at the extreme left flank of Federal forces on the hill called Little Round Top during the battle of Gettysburg. Chamberlain's orders were to hold that position at all costs, for if the Confederates could get to the top of the hill and overwhelm Chamberlain's men, they would be able to rake flanking fire down the entire line of Northern defenders. Chamberlain and his men repulsed two charges by the enemy until at last, depleted of sufficient ammunition to repel the next charge the enemy was about to send, he gave the order to "Fix bayonets" and sent the 20th Maine down the hill to the startled Confederates who broke and ran in retreat. The left flank of Little Round Top was, at least temporarily, secure.

But how often did a bayonet charge actually occur in Civil War engagements? Opinions on this vary and the argument has endured over the years.

Some historians examining the records have dismissed the bayonet as an ineffective weapon during the conflict. After the Battle of Gaines's Mills stories were told in the Confederate camps of the extensive hand to hand fighting in the engagement, much of it with bayonets. Heros Von Borcke, a Confederate cavalry officer, toured the site the next day and reported only three or four bayonet wounds among the numerous dead still on the field. And those wounds appeared to have been subsequent to the victims having already been shot. Other sources of doubt come from the medical records kept by surgeons who served in the war. After the Battle of Lookout Mountain the medical director for the Army of the Cumberland reported finding no bayonet wounds among the casualties, despite the close quarter nature of the fighting. And a doctor for the Army of the Potomac assembled a more organized record of that army's casualties from May to July of 1864 and found bayonet wounds accounted for less than one half of one percent of the injuries. Some think the bayonet was an archaic and ineffectual weapon in the age of rifled muskets and cannon. There is also skepticism about the average soldier's ability to thrust a bayonet into an enemy even in the heat of hand to hand fighting.

In his study of combat *On Killing* author Dave Grossman discusses the instinctive reluctance of human beings to kill at close range, particularly with edged weapons. Killing at a distance, any distance, with a firearm is much easier than the intimacy of killing with a knife or bayonet. Even in those fights involving hand to hand engagements most soldiers preferred to use their rifles to slash or club the enemy rather than actually stab their opponents with the bayonet. In fact there are studies that indicate it was actually more dangerous to break contact with the enemy and turn to flee than it was to stand face to face and continue to fight. It was easier psychologically for the troops to shoot or stab retreating soldiers as they no longer had to observe their facial expressions when they received the blow.

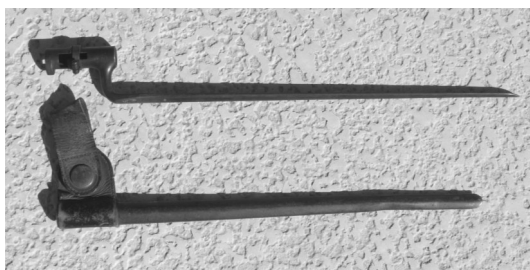
But the lack of documented bayonet wounds among the casualties after a battle does not necessarily translate into the bayonet being an ineffective instrument of war or a weapon without tactical value.

In *The Bloody Crucible of Courage* historian Brent Nosworthy makes a distinction between bayonet fighting and a bayonet charge. He argues that although the bayonet was used with comparative rarity to inflict casualties, military tacticians recognized the value of a bayonet charge. In a bayonet charge the goal is a tactical victory, such as turning a line or moving the enemy from the field as opposed to his destruction. The bayonet charge was an action that united the men in formation and gave a boost to morale in the sense that it gave them a defined, unified physical action that helped maintain cohesiveness of the lines. And such a coordinated movement toward the enemy, if done with obvious resolve, was equally effective in demoralizing the soldiers on the receiving end of the charge as the phalanx of shining blades got increasingly, and more terrifyingly, closer. Nosworthy maintains the effectiveness of the bayonet was in the psychological realm rather than as a weapon of physical destruction.

Similar conclusions are offered by Paddy Griffith in *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*. He contrasts different tactics of large unit combat describing them as the 'engineer' theory as opposed to the 'infantry' solution to defeating the enemy. The former relied on static positions behind fortifications such as earthworks and firing away at the approaching enemy, who often would go to ground as they found themselves within range of the bullets of the protected defenders. Engagements turned into stationary lines →

shooting at one another until either one side was sufficiently reduced in number or the troops of either side ran low on ammunition and were forced to retire. In contrast the 'infantry' theory relied on fluidity of movement and taking action as appropriate in the engagement to exploit any advantage that developed and move the enemy from the field. This second theory was not as dependent on firepower as it was on 'shock action' and the bayonet charge was a very good method to generate the desired shock. The bayonet charge could be employed by the defenders, who would withhold fire until the approaching troops were very close and only then release a volley of fire which would be all the more effective due to the reduced range. That volley would be followed immediately with a bayonet charge to press the advantage and take the fight to the attackers rather than waiting for them to recover and return fire. Similarly, attacking lines would withhold fire until very close, admittedly absorbing some casualties. But the sight of men coming on relentlessly in the face of fire, followed by a coordinated volley and a charge from the attackers, could induce the defenders to abandon their fortifications and retreat. In either case, the bayonet charge could be extremely effective even with all the casualties caused by firearms, but the bayonet still being a critical factor in the ultimate victory. This type of fighting was more difficult because of the coordination required. The risk was higher but the result was often more decisive, and the value of 'shock action' was important when a smaller unit was forced to engage a larger, because of the measure of advantage it brought to the fight.

In conclusion it would seem the bayonet charge was utilized with some regularity throughout the Civil War, even if bayonet fighting in close quarter combat was something much rarer. This would account for the numerous accounts of units engaging with their bayonets at the ready and also the scarcity of documented bayonet wounds found among the casualties. A bayonet charge, even with no bayonet wounds, could still be responsible for the victory. It certainly was an effective tactic for Chamberlain that day on Little Round Top.



UPCOMING ROUND TABLES

May 17, 2011...Brian Wills
My Dancing Days Are Over:
William Dorsey Pender & The Civil War

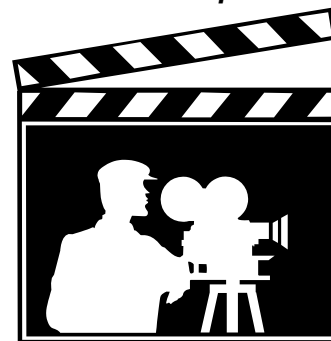
IN THEATERS...APRIL 15TH

The Conspirator

This movie tells the story of Mary Surratt, whose boardinghouse was used as a meeting place for John Wilkes Booth and friends who plotted

Lincoln's assassination and her ensuing trial where she is represented by a Union war hero. Directed by Robert Redford.

For more info: www.conspiratorthemovie.com



WEB SITE OF INTEREST

www.americancivilwar.org.uk

Did you even know they even had such an organization in England? Check out their website...it is a good one.

www.scottsdalecwrvt.vze.com

That's us...check it out and "thank you" Jay Webber for the fantastic job you do with it.

MY UNCLE HENRY -- A GERMAN YANKEE

by Mary Jane Baetz
SCWRT Member

(Part Four of a four-part series)

My great uncle, Major Henry Baetz of Company F of the Twenty-Sixth Wisconsin infantry, fought in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Early in the morning of July 1, 1863 the boom of cannons and artillery roused the Twenty-Sixth from their encampment in Emmitsburg, Maryland and within minutes they fell into a rapid march towards Gettysburg, less than 15 miles away. As they marched they passed the two Round Tops to the east and continued ahead past Cemetery Hill. Upon reaching the center of town, they were deployed to a small hill to the north. As the Confederate forces attacked from the west, the men became fully engaged in the furious fight.

That afternoon the Twenty-Sixth Wisconsin retreated and fell into the position of rear guard at Cemetery Hill. During the fighting in Gettysburg, Uncle Henry fell, severely wounded in the leg. (*Note: * The Twenty-Sixth Wisconsin went on to fight in many other battles until the end of the war and was mustered out of service in 1865. **) Shot in the leg, Uncle Henry was unable to continue the fight. A month later, on a surgeon's certificate of disability, he resigned his commission and returned to his home town of Manitowoc where he slowly recovered and was honorably discharged from the Union Army.

Proud of his service to his country, but disgusted and angry about the slurs and accusations laid upon the German soldiers who served for the Union, he vowed to never again speak of that controversy. Instead, he looked to the future and as soon as his health permitted, he embarked on a lifetime of service and success in both the public and private sectors.

Memoirs of Milwaukee County, printed in 1909, describes his life as follows:

In 1866 he was elected Treasurer of Manitowoc County, and re-elected in 1868. In 1869 he was elected to the position of Treasurer of the State of Wisconsin, and two years later was re-elected to the same position, filling the office in a very creditable manner four years.

Upon retiring from office he returned to Manitowoc, and a year later, in 1875, he removed to the city of Milwaukee, where he engaged in newspaper work. In 1878 he was elected by the common council as City Librarian of Milwaukee, being the first to fill that position, and this he resigned to accept the office of Secretary of the State Board of Immigration in 1880.

Three years later, in 1883, he resigned the last-named position to enter the employ of the Philip Best, now the Pabst Brewing Company of Milwaukee, with whom he

was associated for the ensuing twenty-one years. After being with that firm some time he obtained a financial interest in the Pabst Mine, near Ironwood, Mich., being made Secretary and General Agent of the same, and he lived at the mine three years, so engaged. He then disposed of his mining interests and returned to Milwaukee, accepting the position of General Purchaser for the Pabst Brewing Company. In 1904 he retired from the activities of business.

Major Baetz gives an unswerving allegiance to the men and measures of the Republican party, with which organization he has been prominently identified from the beginning, and his fraternal associations are with the Masonic order, having been a member of Tracy lodge, No. 107, of Manitowoc.

Other organizations with which Major Baetz is identified are the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters; the Wisconsin Archeological Society; the Milwaukee Musical Society; and the Old Settlers' Club of Milwaukee County. He has been president of the Deutscher Club, and for a period of nine years served in a like capacity for the "Deutsche Gesellschaft von Milwaukee," an incorporated society to aid and assist immigrants from Germany and other European countries, on their arrival in Milwaukee.

He lived until he was nearly 80 years old, July 27, 1830 to January 2, 1910. He and his wife, Emma, are buried in Manitowoc, Wisconsin along with their only child, Oscar, who died in 1860 at the tender age of five months.

And so, this concludes the fourth and final segment in the series about Major Henry Baetz -- except for one last thought: "What a guy! I wish I could have known *My Uncle Henry, A German Yankee.*"



Major Henry Baetz