

Newsletter of The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table

Welcome to our fellowship forum where we discuss our past, emphasizing remembrance, education & preservation.

Meetings held at The Radisson Penn-Harris Hotel—1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania
Online: harrisburgcwr.org

November 15—Matt Spruill Second Manassas Command Decisions

Matt Spruill is a retired U.S. Army colonel. Upon graduating from college, he was commissioned a second lieutenant and spent the next 28 years serving throughout the United States, Vietnam, Germany, Japan, Italy, and the Netherlands. He retired in 1992, and has spent the last three decades studying, lecturing, and writing on the Civil War. Col. Spruill currently has ten books in print and three second edition revisions. He has extensive experience conducting tours, on-the-battlefield seminars, and staff rides and is a former Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide.

He graduated from The Citadel with a BA-History and the University of Missouri at Kansas City with a MA-History. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, and the NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy. He was on the faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.

Col. Spruill is the author of nine Civil War Books. He is the co-editor of the University of Tennessee Press's prestigious new series "Command Decisions in America's Civil War." His latest books are *Decisions at Stones River* (2018), *Decisions at Second Manassas* (2018), *Guide to the Battle of Chickamauga* (2018) and *Decisions at Gettysburg* (2019). His next book will be *Decisions of the Seven Days*.

Chancellorsville notwithstanding, Second Manassas is considered Robert E. Lee's finest campaign and battle. Events did not happen at random but because of Fourteen Critical Decisions that shaped and defined the course of the campaign and events. Col. Spruill will discuss these decisions and how they shaped the outcome at Second Manassas.



DINNER IS SERVED!

FRIDAY, November 15
Governor B—Hotel

6:00 pm—St. James Punch 6:45 pm—Dinner
7:45 pm—Meeting 8:00 pm—Talk

Menu Options:

- (A) Roast Turkey with Gravy
- (B) Cod Florentine

The dinner also includes

Mixed Green Salad, Tuscan Rolls and Butter
Pumpkin Pie
Coffee, Tea

Cost: \$24 per person.

**Dinner reservations must be made no later than 7 p.m.
Tuesday, November 12**

Make reservations on the website at harrisburgcwr.org
Please back up your reservation with a phone call to
Sam Waldrop at 717-422-3007 or email at
hcwr.membership@gmail.com

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harrisburgcwr.org

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The President's Pen

Last month, we were treated to a special presentation by Dr. Earl Hess on the Atlanta Campaign. He spoke to us and at the Civil War museum in Harrisburg; I hope you were able to attend both events. After his talk, with a good group of people at the Square Table we continued discussions of the Atlanta Campaign and other topics. I encourage members to attend this part of the meeting as our speakers really look forward to it.

The fall field trip is this month to the Wilderness. I hope many of you are going and have a great time. The tour guide is excellent, and Steve Smith and Ricky Hollis do a great job of putting these trips together.

This month Matt Spruill is the speaker. He will also speak at the Civil War Museum. Each lecture is different so you will not want to miss any of them. We are having a few more joint ventures this year so take advantage of this opportunity.

At the October meeting, several people arrived for dinner without making a reservation. We certainly welcome everyone, but the hotel food service really scrambled in order to feed all guests. They prepare our dinners based on reservations so PLEASE reserve in advance. You may contact Sam Waldrop directly if you are not able to use the website to make your reservation.

Linda Meenaghan

Land Where My Fathers Died

by Stephen Ward Smith, Colonel (Ret.), U.S. Army, Vice-President, HCWRT

November 11 has special significance in Europe, where I served with the U.S. Army for over three decades. Known there as Armistice Day or Remembrance Day, it marks the date the guns fell silent during the "Great War." In America, the name was changed to Veterans Day in 1954, to commemorate the sacrifices of all those who served in our nation's armed forces. In the three years since I retired and returned to my native Pennsylvania, I've participated in many Veterans Day events at local high schools, which have given special meaning to the oft-repeated phrase "thank you for your service."

This year Veterans Day will take on even greater significance for me. In the last month I've discovered the identities of three great-great-grandfathers who fought for the Union during the Civil War, and I located and visited two of their graves.

My interest in the Civil War dates back to childhood in Mechanicsburg and the Sunday drives our family took to Gettysburg, where my sister and I would clamber over the cannons and boulders. Decades later, as I adjusted to retired life in my former stomping grounds, I sought the company of others who had a passion for military history and a reverence for those who fought for our nation. That's what inspired me to attend my first Round Table meetings in 2016, where I found intellectual stimulation and warm camaraderie. I was a little envious of fellow members who knew who their forefathers were and what unit they had served in during the Civil War. Like many Americans, I always assumed I had ancestors who fought in the war, but I had no idea who they were.

All that changed last month when my aunt sent me the obituary of Private John W. Ward, who lived in Sharpsburg and joined the Maryland Home Brigade when the Civil War broke out. He later served in the 13th Maryland Infantry, fought in the entire war, lived to the ripe old age of 89, and is buried in Antietam National Cemetery. My aunt also informed me that my great-grandmother's father, Israel Baublitz, who was from York County, served as a Private in the 87th Pennsylvania Volunteers, was captured at the battle of Carter's Woods in June 1863, survived imprisonment on Belle Isle in Richmond, was paroled, and was later wounded during the Overland Campaign. I also discovered a third great-great-grandfather, Private William H. Noble, who joined the 155th Pennsylvania Infantry in Pittsburgh in 1862, a unit that wore flashy Zouave uniforms and fought in every battle from Fredericksburg to Appomattox.

There is much more I have to learn about these soldiers and their units, but this much is already clear. My interest in the Civil War is no longer strictly academic or professional. It is deeply personal. Our round table's field trips have also taken on a new dimension. Part of me was there. And my devotion to our round table has only grown stronger, as together, we seek to better appreciate what our forefathers fought for and endured.

As I stood over John Ward's grave at Antietam, I saluted him, thanked him for his service, and told him I had never been prouder of my middle name than I was at that moment.

It is good to be back in the land where my fathers died. Let freedom ring.



The Battle of the Wilderness Field Trip—Saturday, November 16, 2019

The Harrisburg and Hershey Civil War Round Tables' fall field trip is fast approaching. Here are a few key things you need to know:

- ◆ As this newsletter went to press, a few seats were still available. Anyone wishing to attend who has not already registered should contact Steve Smith at 717-433-0209 or smith337@erau.edu immediately.
- ◆ Departure times for this day trip are one hour earlier than they were for the spring field trip to Harpers Ferry. Our bus will depart the Lower Dauphin High School parking lot at **6:00 am**. It will depart the Radisson Camp Hill Convention Center parking lot at **6:30 am**. Plan to arrive at the departure point approximately **15 minutes prior** to departure time.
- ◆ Dress warmly! As we learned during last fall's field trip to Monocacy, it can get pretty nippy in November. Wear good walking shoes and bring along a light-weight folding stool if you have difficulty standing for extended periods of time.
- ◆ Water and snacks will be available on the bus. We will make one pit stop on the way south and one on the way back.
- ◆ Anyone who is not yet paid in full should pay off their balance due ASAP. Checks should be made payable to "HCWRT," and sent to Norm Daniels at 500 Bonnymead Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17111.
- ◆ Our guide, Dr. Chris Mackowski, is really looking forward to making this battle come alive for us!

Meeting Schedule—Campaign 61

12/12/19 (Thursday)

The Experience of Combat

Greg Hillebrand, HCWRT Member

1/24/20

Searching for Black Confederates

Kevin Levin

2/28/20

Little Round Top: "Hold That Ground at All Hazards"

Joe Boslet, HCWRT Member

3/26/20 (Thursday)

Hinsonville's Heros

Cheryl Renee Gooch

4/24/20

Abraham Lincoln

Matt Pinsker

5/15/20—Nye-Sommers Lecture

R. E. Lee

Allen C. Guelzo

6/19/20

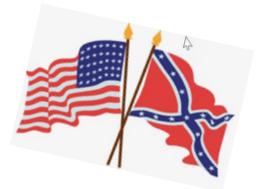
Cold Harbor

Bert Dunkerly

Welcome New Members

Introduce yourself and make welcome our new fellow warriors!

- ◆ Mark and Angela Adler, Mechanicsburg—coming to us from the Long Island CWRT
- ◆ Don Madar, Harrisburg
- ◆ Brian Gorman, Harrisburg



Remember to make dinner reservations at the new website, harrisburgcwrt.org.

For a couple months, also let Sam Waldrop know your dinner selection.

Call: 717-422-3007 or email: hcwrt.membership@gmail.com



The Dispatch

The Harrisburg Civil War Round Table
PO Box 124
Mechanicsburg, PA

November 2019

Gen. John W. Geary
Gettysburg NMP

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Online: harrisburgcwr.org



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Harrisburg Civil War Round Table Enlistment Form

Current Member Renewal

- Individual \$24
- Family \$36
- Full Time Student \$5

New Members Only

- Individual \$34 (includes badge)
- Family \$56 (includes two badges)
- Full Time Student \$9 (includes badge)

Individual or Family Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Contact HCWRT, Membership Chair, PO Box 124, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055.

Phone 717-422-3007, E-mail hcwrt.membership@gmail.com