



The Picket Post

The Central Virginia Civil War Collectors Association

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May 2014

Meeting Time & Date

Our meeting location is the American Legion Hall at 2522 Indale Road in Glen Allen and our meeting date is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:15 pm.

Our upcoming meeting is May 27, 2014 and Pete George will speak on *Civil War Artillery Shells & Fuses*. Pete is one of the foremost experts on Civil War artillery and co-authored the definitive reference, *Field Artillery Projectiles of the American Civil War*, along with the late Thomas Dickey. Please bring your artillery-related items.

Monthly Meeting

Relic of the Month –



Perry Cummings – Found a picket bullet and then a NC Sunburst. Then he went on to the CS line in Dinwiddie, where he dug a cuff button and cleaned it at home and found it had an engineers castle. This was from the 7th NY formed before the war and made 10th Company before being disbanded in 1862. The unit was made up of the upper crust from NYC. Perry also found a star bullet and civilian button and an 1861 Indian Head Penny. He went back to the same spot and his friend found a large Marine Corps button with 85% gilding.



Jack Mountcastle hunted in an area where some brush had been cut and found Union material, including Eagle l's, Type 1 Williams Cleaners and also a lot of fired Gardners from where the position was being fired on.

This Month's Presentation

This month, our very own Steve Schmit presented *Artifacts of the Maritime Services* and explained naval roles during the Civil War. Many of us don't often think about how varied the maritime services are. They include the US Navy, US Marine Corps, US Lighthouse Service, US Lifesaving Service and the US Revenue Cutter service.

From a historian's standpoint, in 1861, the Navy had about 90 ships with only half seaworthy, 7000 sailors and 1,500 commissioned officers. About 15 percent of senior navy officers resigned their commissions when the war started.

Admiral David Farragut was in charge of the Gosport/Norfolk Navy Yard. Gideon Wells was Secretary of Navy. Lincoln took office and the vessels were down to 23. Gen. Winfield Scott, around since the War of 1812 and hero of Mexican War, understood the important role of the Navy, transportation, covering fire, etc. Lincoln looked to Scott for a quick end of the war. Scott developed his "Anaconda" plan, to blockade the entire seacoast and divide the CS into parts and conquer each one at a time. The plan was to capture the Mississippi and separate east from west, followed by the Cumberland River and the Tennessee River. Action at Fort Donelson and Shiloh/Pittsburg Landing took place under this plan. Step 3 was to capture the capital of the

Confederacy, leading to the rallying cry: Onward to Richmond!

Available for the operation were 1,457 officers. 16 captains, 34 commanders, 74 midshipmen. There were four classes of ships based on tonnage, followed by frigates, cutters, corvettes, sloops and gunboats. And then by steam, five-wheelers, etc. forming a great breadth of operations.

The navy increased to 657 ships, up from the original 23. Steven Mallet was in charge of CS Navy and he started with zero ships, no budget and no navy. Some shipbuilding took place at Columbus Navy Yard not too far from Fort Benning. The Confederates evacuated from there and sent CSS Jackson and another ship downstream on fire. They burned to the waterline and sank. Now they have been found, along with a lot of melted items.

Many ships were built in England, France, Spain and Italy, but International rules did not allow armaments to be mounted in port. The CSS Alabama under Raphael Simms is noteworthy for sinking more ships than any other in the Confederate Navy. It sunk or captured some 70 ships before it was sunk. There were two CSS Floridas, one sunk in Chesapeake Bay. The other was towed to Philadelphia and its items auctioned off. Steve has a cutlass from this ship.

Confederate Matthew Maury, was known as “the Pathfinder of the Seas,” a name he got after becoming an ensign and charting ocean currents that are still in use today.

There was no American rank of Admiral before the Civil War because the founders saw this as indicative of royalty and admiralty of the British. Instead, Commodore, Captain, Petty Officer and Boatswain were used. Eventually Franklin Buchanan becomes the first and only Confederate admiral. The rest were captains.

Gunboats typically carried 6-8 guns. After the ironclad battle of the Merrimac and Monitor in the Spring of '62, souvenir collectors salvaged the metal from disabled ships. At the 1907 300th Jamestown and sold metal from CSS Virginia, now \$600-700 items. Steve has 3-4 nails from the Virginia. CW was the last war of wooden naval vessels, although last wooden vessel was made in 1897, but not for warfare.

Steve has 1860 Naval Regulation Book. There are a lot of terms that the navy used that were used nowhere else. It mentioned use of a hastener. Turns out, a hastener was a stick used to hasten the sailor to his position! Steve also has several tactical manuals. Steve's book has a list of officers who used his copy. Some terms we still use in common vernacular. Such as “tow the line,” which originally didn't mean what we think. At that time, it was “toe the line” and meant to put toes even with a tarred/oakum rope.

Because so many maritime objects had a civilian use, almost everything was marked by the Naval Department to prevent theft. Most bottles were marked US Navy along with the contents. Many tools had a hole in them for a lanyard around your wrist so it wouldn't go overboard.

Pocketknife was called a jackknife and had to have a ring and lanyard attached. Steve also showed three sizes of map tools, which were sized to go with the size of the map area.

Naval Relics – The primary naval emblem is an eagle on an anchor. The anchor angle changed over time. PD on one of Steve's buttons stands for Pay Department. It was later shortened to just P. Some are very large and there are variations in color. The vertical with 1848 patent date is the rarer.

Naval cartridge boxes had a single loop, as you might expect on a Confederate one. The scabbards have lots of brass rivets. John Frawner related that naval officers' jackets had a cut to accommodate the cutlass and that 1860 Cutlasses were used up into 1962! Most were made by Ames. Steve has a Model 1862 Officers cutlass, a very rare item.

One of Steve's naval swords has a tinned blade, as do many naval cutlasses. This was to protect the steel blade and shows it's the real deal. A lot of CS items were poorly made steel and had fewer or no rivets to hold the hilt to the blade. Steve's example is likely New Orleans.

Naval firearms included the Model 1842 Springfield. In 1861, a shorter rifle was introduced, the Model 1861 Whitney, also called the Plymouth because the first issue was to the USS Plymouth. These were equipped with a very long saber bayonet that defeated the purpose.

Dahlgren produced a series of guns. One 15-inch ball weighed 440 pounds! Steve showed a front sight for a naval cannon. This is distinguished from the army one because it has markings on it as most did. Naval ones are short and stubby to fit in and out of the gun port. Naval gun tools also have wooden handles – less metal to rust.

Monitor class vessels became popular and one token even has “Our Monitor.”

Cutlasses and edged weapons probably had a lot more usefulness to sailors that had to board a ship once captured than they had in the army.

Steve noted that the Marine Corps, mainly use for security detail and amphibious landings were issued Model 1841 Mississippi rifles, marked GNY for Gosport Navy Yard. These were used by Sharpshooters. They did not like the term “sniper.”

Steve gave us some definitions of the terms, cutlass, saber and sword. A sword is generic and used for anything longer than a knife. A sword often has two edges for cutting and thrusting. A saber has only one cutting edge for cutting and slashing, and so has a more curved blade which helps focus the percussion point. A pike can have 3-4 sides, whereas a lance has only two sides.

First fluted bayonet was used in 1816, but swords with “blood gutters” were used as early as the Revolutionary War. It wasn't until 1907 that the US Government finally decided to recognize CW veterans.

Steve ended with the maxim that “The cannonading of two ships was a better test of their timbers than the mettle of their crews.” Well, shiver me timbers!

Some of the Schmit Collection naval relics follow:



Most Navy bottles were marked US Navy along with the contents.



A Marlin Spike was used to help untangle knots in rope. Note the hole, as in many naval items, used to tie on a lanyard so it wouldn't be dropped overboard.



Admiral Dahlgren redesigned a shorter naval bayonet. This is a scarce item. Steve has a first version Dahlgren bayonet with the almost non-existent scabbard. The scabbard was painted probably to protect from salt spray.



A wooden wedge with handle called a quoin was used to level the cannons when sighting.



This leather item with thumb hole was used to grip

and repair sails and also used to drive a huge needle through the thick canvas.



Steve showed some pieces of wood from the USS Constellation, USS Constitution and USS Cairo.



Steve stopped at an antique shop near Charlottesville and found a tin that looked like a breadbox. Inside were US Model 1859 Marine Corps epaulettes and a Model 1859 1st Lieutenant shoulder knot.

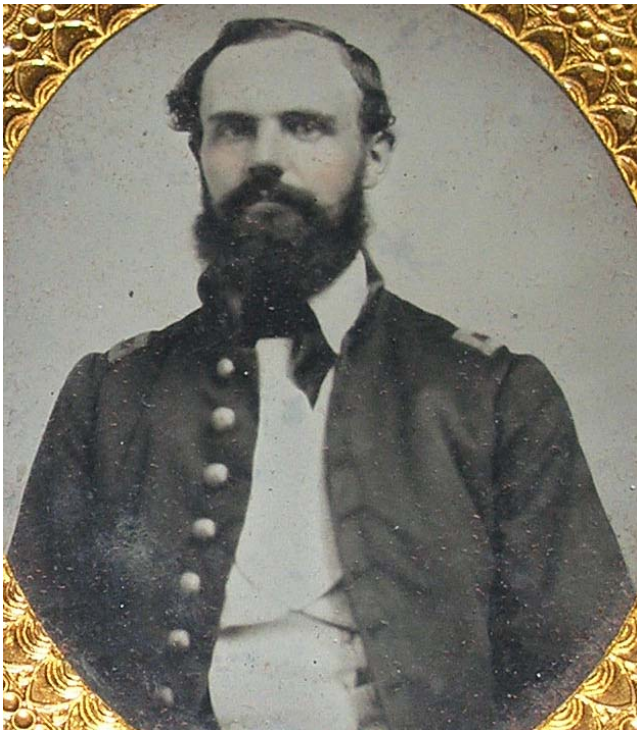


Examples of Confederate naval cutlasses.



Blades from the brass- and wood-handled cutlasses above. Note the poor quality of steel available to the Confederacy.

“Displays – This month members brought and discussed the following items from their collections, with emphasis on naval items.



Ben Greenbaum displayed several images of the Garber family, two of which were killed in action. A number of letters were also found. Shown are Major A W Garber and 2nd Lt. Michael C Garber. The cutlass is American naval from 1770-1780, found in Maine by a former student of Ben's. It has a figure 8 guard popular during the period. The naval hat is very rare and was found in Utah.



Thomas Garnett found this 100 lb parrot naval fuse at the club hunt in eastern Henrico.



Alan Lane displayed this telescope/spyglass that has been in his wife's family for years. It belonged to an early naval officer in her family and is pre-war dating to around 1815-20. The owner was an Annapolis grad and became consul to China and died there in the 1850s and buried there. Alan also has a portrait, which is probably his wife in mourning. The cover over the front lens is usually earlier – one that slides. The wood is yew veneer wrapped around brass and glued.



Naval officers often wore dolphin spurs as a symbol of rank, although the "dolphins" looked more like sea serpents.



Ben's naval sword with a dolphin at the end of the hilt.



Naval sword with dolphin pommel from the MOC.

CVCWCA Caps & Patches!

Thanks to David Garnett for taking the initiative to do a new run of CVCWCA caps and patches. These have the club logo as shown on the upper left of this page, which David personally designed. \$17.00 for hats with patches sewn on. \$5.00 for patches alone. Contact David at 746-4668.

CVCWCA on Facebook!

Thanks to Robyn Bradshaw, our club treasurer for taking the initiative to create a Facebook page for the club. Visit us today, search for CVCWCA and become a friend!

Upcoming CVCWCA Programs

Ideas Wanted – David Garnett requests that members submit ideas for upcoming programs. If anyone wants to give a presentation, please also let David know.

June 24 – Ron Rigney. *Hut Digging in Culpeper and at Berkeley Plantation*

July 22 – Roland Frodig. *Relic Restoration*

Aug 26 – Craig Bell. *VA Manufactured Arms & Weapons*

Sept 23 – *Club Mini Relic Show*, an annual favorite

Oct 28 – Club Annual Meeting at the MOC, hosted by Robert Hancock

(MISSING MONTHS ARE TBA,
EXCEPT DEC. WHEN THERE IS NO MEETING)

President	Jack Mountcastle, 789-9818
Vice Pres./Show	Allen Lane, 928-1006
Vice Pres./Programs	David Garnett, 746-4668
Secretary	Bob Baird, 798-5555
Treasurer	Robyn Bradshaw, 339-0469

Upcoming Shows & Events

*Remember, before traveling any distance to attend
a show, be sure to call and verify the dates and time!*

May 24, 2014 Special programs, "Reverberations," NPS ranger programs at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Richmond National Battlefield Park and the Petersburg National Battlefield present 150th-anniversary programs with "sister" communities affected by the battles. More evening programs at Petersburg cemeteries. nps.gov/rich, nps.gov/frsp, nps.gov/pete

May 24, 2014 Walking tour, "Brown's Island" home of the Confederate Laboratory, begins at the Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond. Noon. Free with admission. 804-780-1865 extension 23.

May 29-June 1, 2014 Anniversary activities, "Battle of Totopotomoy Creek, " near Richmond. NPS tours, living history and more at the Shelton House. [nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/ 150th1864.htm](http://nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/150th1864.htm)

May 31-June 3, 2014 Anniversary activities, "Battle of Cold Harbor," near Richmond. NPS tours, living history, talks, music and more. [nps.gov/rich/ planyourvisit/ 150th1864.htm](http://nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/150th1864.htm)

June 1-3, 2014 Anniversary activities, "Battle of Cold Harbor," near Richmond. NPS tours, living history, talks, music and more. [nps.gov/rich/ planyourvisit/ 150th1864.htm](http://nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/150th1864.htm)

June 7, 2014 Anniversary activities, "Battle of Cold Harbor," "Misery in the Trenches" At Cold Harbor Park 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm [nps.gov/rich/ planyourvisit/ 150th1864.htm](http://nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/150th1864.htm)

June 7, 2014 Living history, "Fire! Rifle Musket Program," at the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond. Noon. Free with admission. tredegar.org

June 8, 2014 "Drummer's Call: Field Music of the Civil War," at the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond. 1 pm. Free with admission. tredegar.org

June 14, 2014 Bus tour, "Grant's Army moves from Cold Harbor to Petersburg." NPS tour meets at the Cold Harbor visitor center, 5515 Anderson-Wright Drive, Mechanicsville. 8:30 am-4:30 pm. \$45. Reservations: 804-335-8100. Info: nps.gov/rich

June 14, 2014 Walking tour, "Brown's Island," site of the Confederate States' Laboratory. Begins at the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond. Noon. Free with admission. tredegar.org

June 14, 2014 Walking tour, "From Belles to Battleaxes: The Women of Civil War Richmond," begins at the Bell Tower on Capitol Square in Richmond. 10:30 am. \$15. Reservations: 855-649-1861 extension 121.

June 14-15, 2014 Living history, ranger programs and more, "Opening Assaults Weekend," at the Petersburg National Battlefield. Details: nps.gov/pete

June 18, 2014 Walking tour, "At This Moment: Charge of the 1st Marine Heavy Artillery," at Stop 5, Petersburg National Battlefield. 4:30 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete

June 20, 2014 Talk, "Cold Harbor: The Civilian Side," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. Noon. Free with museum admission. moc.org

June 21, 2014 Boat tours, Civil War sites on the James River. Tours leave from Deep Bottom Park, southeast of Richmond. 9-11 am or 6-8 pm. \$45. Reservations: 804-652-3409.

June 26, 2014 Lecture, "Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause," at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. Noon. \$6. vahistorical.org

June 28-29, 2014 The Gettysburg Civil War Show and Antique Arms Show. Held at Allstar Events Complex at the Eisenhower Inn at Gettysburg. Contact 717-334-2350.

(Thanks to Dennis Madison for the
Calendar of Events for this month's newsletter!)

CVCWCA Newsletter

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