



General Orders

Barnes' Texas Brigade

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OCTOBER 2011 MEETING Thursday, Oct. 20, 2011

The Briar Club
2603 Timmons Lane @ Westheimer
6:00 Cash Bar
7:00 Dinner & Meeting

E-Mail Reservation is Preferred;
at drzuckero@sbcglobal.net
or call Don Zuckero at (281) 479-1232
By 6 PM on Monday Oct. 17, 2011
Dinner \$33; Lecture Only \$5

Note: Reservations are required for Lecture Only!

The HCWRT PRESENTS

Dr. James S. Robbins

***"Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett
and the Goats of West Point"***

"Today's "Goat," the West Point cadet finishing at the bottom of his class, enjoys a short-lived celebrity among his classmates. But in the 19th century, he was something of a cult figure. One of these famous Goats was General George Armstrong Custer. Custer's contemporaries at the Academy believed that the same spirit of adventure that led him to carouse at forbidden local taverns during his West Point days also motivated his dramatic cavalry attacks in the Civil War and afterwards. And the same willingness to risk the wrath of the Academy also sent another famous Goat, Gen. George Pickett, marching fearlessly and perhaps foolishly into the teeth of the Union guns at Gettysburg.

Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett and the Goats of West Point guides the reader from the difficult beginnings of West Point through the Civil War to the grassy bluffs over Little Big Horn. It is a social history of West Point, a combat narrative, and a string of remarkable profiles of remarkable men. Making extensive use of primary sources, many previously unpublished. Robbins paints portraits of many other

figures who made military history after leaving the Academy under a cloud — including Jefferson Davis, Philip Sheridan, and James Longstreet — along with washouts like Edgar Allan Poe and James M. Whistler, who made a different kind of history."



About Dr. Robbins



"Dr. James S. Robbins is Senior Editorial Writer for Foreign Affairs at the Washington Times, and Senior Fellow in National Security Affairs at the American Foreign Policy Council. Dr. Robbins is a former special assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and in 2007 was awarded the Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff Joint Meritorious Civilian Service Award. He writes a national security column for National Review Online and his work has also appeared in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and other publications. He appears regularly on international television and radio including the BBC, Voice of America, Al Jazeera, MSNBC, and the Fox News Channel, among others. Dr. Robbins holds a PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and has taught at the National Defense University and Marine Corps University, among other schools. His research interests include terrorism and national security strategy, political theory and military history."

OCTOBER QUIZ

By Jim Godlove

The Number One graduate in George Pickett's Class of 1846 was Charles S. Stewart who went on to an undistinguished army career. However, the man who graduated second became a noted Civil War general, a presidential candidate, and a Governor of New Jersey.

The Number One graduate in George Custer's Class of 1861 was Patrick O'Rourke who died at the head of 140th New York during the Civil War.

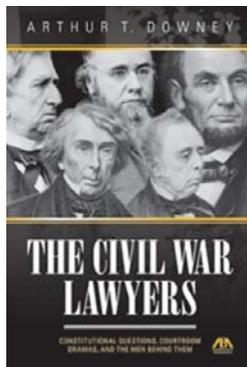


Who was the Number Two man in Pickett's class and in what battle did the Number One man in Custer's class die?

BOOK REVIEW

By C. Michael Harrington

(Originally published in the October 2011 edition of *The Civil War News*)



Civil War Lawyers: Constitutional Questions, Courtroom Dramas, and the Men Behind Them. By Arthur T. Downey. Illustrated, notes, appendices, index, 482 pp., 2010, American Bar Association, www.ababooks.org, \$34.95.

Readers of this publication who can get beyond the off-putting title of this book, with its emphasis upon — ho-hum — lawyers, will do themselves a favor. Over the past half century, this reviewer has read scores, if not hundreds, of books on Civil War topics. This book is one of the best of the lot.

Authored by a retired Washington lawyer, *Civil War Lawyers* is an overview of the critical role that both the law and lawyers played in American society during the Civil War era. The book is well written, thoroughly researched and unusually informative.

The eight chapters that make up the book proceed in chronological order, beginning with the Declaration of Independence and concluding with what Downey calls the "revenge" trials that emerged from the Lincoln assassination and the "non-trial" of Jefferson Davis. Intermediate chapters deal with such topics as the Dred Scott case, John Brown's trial, secession and the abolition of slavery.

This reviewer's favorite chapter is the one dealing with the war at sea, international law and diplomacy, in part because I understood so little about this subject. Downey practiced and taught international law for years, and he clearly explains letters of marque and reprisal and what distinguishes a privateer from a pirate, topics vital to an understanding of the Confederacy's conduct of naval warfare.

Downey's assessments of several prominent 19th century lawyers challenge conventional views. Chief Justice Roger Taney, who wrote the much-maligned majority opinion in the Dred Scott case, comes off as a deeply learned and morally courageous jurist. In what Downey terms a "masterful performance," Taney's May 1861 opinion in *Ex Parte Merryman* challenged President Lincoln's constitutional authority to suspend the writ of habeas corpus despite the popular furor in the president's favor.

The lawyer who appears most prominently in this book is, quite rightfully, Abraham Lincoln. Downey points out that no president practiced law longer than Lincoln. In addition to his experience at the bar, Lincoln brought a brilliant and disciplined legal mind to his office. Lincoln not only conceived the Emancipation Proclamation, but he also drafted it -- working alone and lawyerlike in his study in the White House. Doubtless no modern president, even one with legal training, would undertake to draft single-handedly such a weighty document.

In several chapters of the book, under the rubric that Downey calls the "Continuing Legal Debate," the author uses the topic of that chapter to shed light on contemporary legal or political issues. For example, the Continuing Legal Debate that concludes the chapter on the revenge trials teaches the timeless lesson that "justice is not truly rendered in the inflamed passions of the moment."

One of the three appendices of the book provides thumbnail biographies of more than 100 of the principal lawyers mentioned in Downey's text. Another summarizes about a dozen cases in which prominent lawyers of the Civil War era intersected professionally, including an 1855 patent lawsuit that brought together Lincoln and his future Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Period photographs and editorial cartoons complement the narrative nicely.

This reviewer strongly recommends *Civil War Lawyers* to all those, fellow lawyers and non-lawyers alike, who seek a better understanding of how the law and lawyers so heavily influenced the history of the Civil War era.

OCTOBER BOOK RAFFLE

By Donnie Stowe



The week after our October meeting we will be on our way to tour the Overland Campaign with Frank O'Reilly thanks to Tony Matt. I, for one, am looking forward to it.

For our raffle this month I'm beginning with **A DIARY OF BATTLE** –The personal journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright 1861-1865. My thanks to Norman Lewis for this volume. Next up is **THE HISTORY OF THE CONFEDERACY 1832-1865** by Clifford Dowdey and donated by Charlie Mitchel. Third in the raffle is the tenth anniversary edition of Shelby Foote's volume 1 of **THE CIVIL WAR - A Narrative**. This is the first volume of a fourteen volume set published by Time-Life Books. And last, but not least is **A HISTORY OF THE 15TH SOUTH CAROLINA INFANTRY 1861-1865** by James B. Clary and was donated by Jim Godlove.

I wish to continue with thanks to all our members who contribute books and magazines to this raffle. Without your support, it would be difficult to provide such a wide range of such enjoyable reading source material for fellow members of the HCWRT

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS and DISTRIBUTION

By Philip Brown

This year marks the second full year that I am serving the Round Table as its Newsletter Editor. I took on the job with the understanding that I am more of a technician than an editor or writer. Various individuals provide the majority of the newsletter content to me. I then "paste" it all together and get it ready for production and distribution.

Regular articles informing the membership of the upcoming meeting topic, speaker, quiz, book raffle information, along with a posting of future topics and speakers provide a good foundation for the letter. Other periodic notices provide additional content and an occasional submission from members fills out the remainder of the white space that is available on three pages. This month we ran short of content and Michael Harrington graciously us with a copy of his latest book review.

That brings me to the point of this rare contribution from your editor. Please lend a hand in any way that you can. Our production schedule is a bit loose but we generally like to get the letter in the mail about 10 days

before each meeting, so if you have any announcements, or information that you feel would be of interest to our readers please email all the particulars to Newsletter@HoustonCivilWar.com at least 17 days before the meeting. We'll do everything we can to include your submission in the next letter. Thanks in advance for the help!

I am also responsible for the distribution of the electronic versions of the letters that most of you get. David Rains picks up the slack by getting copies printed and mailed out via the USPS to those members who have elected to receive the letter by mail. Regarding the distribution of the emailed newsletter PDF files: Each month we get a varying number of what we call "email bounce backs" when there is an issue with the delivery of the email. This can be caused by a number of different reasons. The main reasons for bounce backs are (1) a bad email address, (2) spam blockers, and (3) the recipients email box is full. In an effort to help us make sure that you get the emails we send to you please inform the membership team if you change your email address. You can contact the membership team at Membership@HoustonCivilWar.com. To prevent your spam blocker from returning the letter to us you can add the Newsletter@HoustonCivilWar.com email address to what is called your "white list". If this is a foreign term to you check the HELP menu on your spam blocker for more information. Lastly don't let your email boxes fill up.

When we get bounce backs we do our best to take corrective action but it adds additional work to the process and with just a little help from you all the bounce backs could be avoided altogether.



HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE 2011 - 2012 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Oct 20, 2011 Jim Robbins - *"Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett and the Goats of West Point"*

Nov 17, 2011 Amanda Foreman - *"Britain and the Civil War"*

Dec 15, 2011 Tom Carhart - *"West Point Civil War Rivalries"*

Jan 19, 2012 Ed Bearss - *To Be Announced*

Feb 16, 2012 Stephen Kinnaman - *"The Building of the Alabama"*

Mar 15, 2012 Carol Berkin - *"Civil War Wives"*

Apr 19, 2012 Pat Falci - *"A.P. Hill: Lee's Forgotten General"*

May 17, 2012 Jerry D. Thompson - *"Sibley and the Southwest"*



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