



General Orders

Jennings' Brigade

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JANUARY 2015 MEETING
Thursday, January 15, 2015

The HESS Club
5430 Westheimer Rd @ Westheimer Way
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 Jan 12, 2015
Dinner \$30; Lecture Only \$10

***** Reservations are Required *****
FOR BOTH DINNER and LECTURE ONLY

The HCWRT Presents
Ed Bearss
Speaking on:

Five Forks
"The Waterloo of the Confederacy"

An important meeting took place aboard the then presidential River Queen anchored off City Point, Virginia. In attendance, besides President Lincoln, were Generals U.S. Grant and William T. Sherman, and Admiral David D. Porter. Sherman had left his army group at Goldsboro, North Carolina, just 125 miles south of Petersburg. On his arrival at City Point, he championed a suggestion that General Philip H. Sheridan's cavalry corps, which had crossed the James River, join him in North Carolina. After this merger, they would deal with Confederate forces of General Joseph Johnston in the Smithfield area, then cross into Virginia and flush General Robert E. Lee's army out of its Petersburg defenses and President Davis out of Richmond.

Both President Lincoln and General Grant were unimpressed with Sherman's idea. Instead Sherman was instructed to return to Goldsboro and to remain there until April 11. Grant then assured Lincoln that he had already completed preparations to take the field by ordering two of General Meade's four infantry corps of the Army of the Potomac to engage Lee at daybreak on March 29. One corps of General O.C. Ord's Army of the James had already crossed the James River. Sheridan's cavalry corps was ready to cross Rowanty Creek to achieve its goal of taking Dinwiddie Court House by nightfall. If all went as planned, the cavalry would be at the court house and General G.K. Warren's corps would be across the Rowanty and closing on the junction of the White Oak and Claiborne Roads.

Grant by nightfall on the first day of his offensive had positioned key units where they could turn the right flank of the Confederate fortifications that were entrenched from the aforementioned junction as far as the Chickahominy River. If dislodged, the Confederates were confronted with a crisis as no fortifications existed between Five Forks and the "Claiborne Return". General Lee, realizing this, rushed General George E. Pickett's five infantry brigades, a battalion of artillery, and three divisions of cavalry to hold "Five Forks at all hazards".

On March 30 and 31, the Confederates did even more. The Rebels at Five Forks took the offensive on the latter day and drove Sheridan's troopers back to Dinwiddie Court House and dislodged Warren's Corps from their position on the White Oak Road. But the Federals were not to be denied. While the rank and file of the Confederates were fighting for their existence, three of their generals, Pickett, Fitz Lee, and Tom Rosser, took time to attend a shad bake, and the Federals won a major victory that has been described as "the Waterloo of the Confederacy". On the Union side, there were

two generals with divergent personalities. The hot-tempered Sheridan did not appreciate Warren's business like approach to a challenging tactical situation. Sheridan relived Warren of his command and Warren was eventually vindicated about twenty years later by a military court of inquiry.



About Mr. Bearss



Mr. Ed Bearss

Mr. Bearss is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran of WWII, a military historian and author especially respected for his work on the Civil War. A much sought-after tour guide of historic battlefields,

Ed served as Chief Historian of the National Park Service from 1981 to 1994 and provided commentary for The Civil War, PBS Series by Ken Burns and also for Civil War Journal on The History Channel.

Ed is a native of Billings, Montana and grew up on a ranch several miles away from the nearest neighbor. His father introduced him to a John Thomason book on Confederate cavalryman Jeb Stuart when he was a young

teenager, and from then on Ed was captivated by the study of the Civil War.

After leaving the Marine Corps, Ed completed his undergraduate education at Georgetown and his graduate work at the University of Indiana. While with the NPS, Ed performed important work in Vicksburg when he and several colleagues pinpointed the location of the long lost Union gunboat USS Cairo and also for identifying two forgotten forts at Grand Gulf, Mississippi.

A forty-one year veteran of the NPS, Ed, serving with distinction as Chief Historian, developed an impressive assortment of new parks, among them Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek. In addition, he made important contributions to the development of sites at Bighorn Canyon, Fort Moultrie, the Eisenhower Farm at Gettysburg, Fort Donelson, the Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch, and the gold miners' route over Chilkoot Pass, among others.

It is as a personal interpreter and contemporary tour guide that Ed to most Americans is best known today. His booming voice, colorful dialogue, boundless energy and above all, unlimited enthusiasm for his subject never fail to captivate and inspire his listeners.



JANUARY SILENT AUCTION

There will be a silent auction at the January HCWRT meeting. Items donated by Mrs. Triplett will be for sale. These include around 20 books, tapes of Ken Burns's Civil war series and some bookends of Rebel soldiers. Shelby Foote's 3 volume series on the war, Bud Robertson's bio. Of Stonewall Jackson are among the books. Bring your checkbook!



JANUARY BOOK RAFFLE

By Donnie Stowe



I do hope everyone had a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We will start this new year of 2015 off by raffling **A CONFEDERATE CHRONICLE –The Life of a Civil War Survivor** by Pamela Chase Hain. This book examines the life of Thomas L. Wragg, who served in both the Confederate army and navy. Next up is **BATTLES and LEADERS of the CIVIL WAR –The opening battles (Vol. # 1)** – Edited by Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel. This volume is donated by Ed Cotham and is a compilation by various union and confederate officers. Our third book in this month's raffle is **FIELDS of HONOR** by this month's speaker and Historian Emeritus – National Park Service – Edwin C. Bearss. The final selection is **The PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY of the CIVIL WAR** and is a donation from Neil Weaver. This is Two Volumes in One – The Decisive Battles + The Calvary.

I wish to thank all the members of our HCWRT for their continued gifts of books to continue this valuable monetary support of this roundtable.

FROM THE EDITOR

By Philip Brown

'Tis not the gale but the set of the sail that determines our path! Alas my sail was set poorly this month and I am a little late in getting this newsletter published. Please understand that on rare occasions there may be delays in the delivery of the newsletter for any number of reasons. Also, do not forget that virtually all of the HCWRT meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month from September through May. Reservations need to be submitted no later than the Monday preceding the meeting. You can always go to the website at www.HoustonCivilWar.com for current information.

JANUARY QUIZ

By Jim Godlove

Writing about the commander of the 5th Corps at Five Forks, Capt. Charles H. Porter stated:

"Thus on the field of battle, after the most successful day's work that he had ever taken part in, was _____ deprived of the command of the corps which he had commanded since March, 1864."



Who was the general relieved and who was the general that relieved him?

THE HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

2014 - 2015 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN – THE HESS CLUB

Jan. 15, 2015 - Ed Bearss – *“Battle of Five Forks”*

Feb. 19, 2015 - Keith Bohannon – *“Battle of Chickamauga”*

Mar. 19, 2015 - Dr. Sally Anne Schmidt – *“The Nau Civil War Collection”*

Apr. 16, 2015 - Gordon Rhea – *“Grant's Overland Campaign - 1864”*

May 21, 2015 - Eric Jacobson – *“Baptism of Fire - in the Federal Lines at Franklin”*

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