



The Newsletter of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table — Vol. XXXII, Issue 11, NOVEMBER 2025

HISTORIAN AND RENOWNED MUSICIAN JARI VILLANUEVA SPEAKS ON "24 NOTES THAT TAP DEEP EMOTIONS: THE STORY OF AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS BUGLE CALL" AT THE NOVEMBER 20th, 2025 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Mark Trbovich

In early July of 1862, elements of Gen. George McClellan's Army of the Potomac recovered in defeat at Harrison's Landing after failing to take the Confederate capital of Richmond. The circumstances were dire to say the least, and it was a moment in history that would give birth to one of the most recognized and revered bugle calls in the nation today. "Taps", initially meant as a tranquil signal to extinguish all camp lights, eventually evolved into the sound of solemn tribute that honors the sacrifice and service of the nation's fallen. The origins of Taps started in Charles City County's Berkeley Plantation, where Union Brig. Gen. Daniel Butterfield and bugler Cpl. Oliver W. Norton revised an earlier version of "Tattoo" into something that has become an enduring musical expression without rival. We are happy to have a worldwide famous musician come visit us, at our November general membership meeting, for the rest of the story.

A Civil War historian and re-enactor, Jari Villanueva is the Artistic Director of the National Association for Civil War Brass Music, Inc., where he directs and leads The Federal City Brass Band and the 26th North Carolina Regimental Band, recreated regi-

MEMBERSHIP MEETING
THURSDAY, November 20, 2025
6 P.M. Social Hour
7 P.M. In-person at the Centreville Regional Library & Streamed on Facebook Live
GUEST SPEAKER:
Jari Villanueva
TOPIC:
"24 Notes That Tap Deep Emotions: The Story of America's Most Famous Bugle Call"

mental bands of the Civil War era. He also sounds bugle calls at many re-enactments. In addition, he was the founding director for the National Civil War Field Music School where students learn to play fife, drum and bugle and continues to teach at the school yearly. Jari retired from the United States Air Force where he spent 23 years with The USAF Band in Washington DC. He is considered the country's foremost expert on military bugle calls, particularly the call of Taps which is sounded at military funerals. Jari planned and coordinated the events surrounding the 150th anniversary of the bugle call Taps in 2012. 150th events were held in Union College NY (where Gen. Dan Butterfield attended school), Arlington National Cemetery, and culminating with a

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For meeting dates and other information, please
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UPCOMING MEETINGS

November 20 Jari Villanueva - "24 Notes
That Tap Deep Emotions: The Story of
America's Most Famous Bugle Call"

December 11 Robert Dunkerly - "The
Other Surrenders: Spring/Summer 1865"

January 8, 2026 Aaron Siever - "Battle
of Pickett's Mill, Georgia, 1864"

February 12, 2026 William Connery -
"Civil War Northern Virginia, 1861"

March 12, 2026 Tim Duskin - "The Mexi-
can War: Training Ground For The Civil
War"

April 9, 2026 Dr. Curt Fields - "An Even-
ing with Gen. U. S. Grant"

May 14, 2026 Rich Condon -
"Emancipation in the Department of the
South"

June 18, 2026 Patrick Falci - "30th Anni-
versary of the Making of the Gettysburg
Movie"

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Melissa A. Winn
Photos: Janet Greentree

In October, I had the privilege — and the challenge — of running the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. It's an incredible event, drawing tens of thousands of runners and spectators from across the country, this year especially as it celebrated its 50th year! As I made my way through the course, I was struck by how many people travel great distances to participate in something that takes place right here in our own backyard.

My friend and fellow-participant, Scott, also commented to me about how fortunate we are to live so close to such a major event. We didn't have to book flights or hotels or spend hours on the road. We just drove a short distance and were part of something that others plan for months to experience. I told him that's exactly how I feel about being a student and enthusiast of the Civil War here in Northern Virginia and the greater Washington, D.C. area.

We live amid some of the most significant sites from the Civil War — battlefields, museums, and historic homes that others must travel hundreds or even thousands of miles to visit. Sites like Manassas, Fredericksburg, Antietam, and Harpers Ferry are practically in our laps. In fact, Manassas Battlefield is one of my favorite spots to run the trails and train for the Marine Corps Marathon. It's easy to take it all for granted, but standing on those fields — or running past memorials and monuments that honor those who served — reminds me of how lucky we are.

For us at the Bull Run Civil War Round Table, history isn't something distant

or abstract. It's tangible and close at hand. We strive to bring you, our valuable members, opportunities to walk the same ground where history was made, to hear from scholars who bring new insights, and to participate in preservation efforts that ensure future generations can do the same.

So this November, in the month of gratitude, as the season turns and the year winds down, I encourage each of you to take advantage of what's in our own backyard — explore, learn, and share your love of history.

See you at our next membership meeting. Remember, this month it's the THIRD Thursday of the month, November 20th at 7 p.m. See you there!



Our October speakers, Chuck Mauro and Don Hakenson, entertained us with more stories about John S. Mosby's activities in Northern Virginia

SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

ceremony at Berkeley Plantation in Charles City, VA where Taps was born.

Come join us early at our November 20th, 2025 Membership Meeting to have an opportunity to chat with Jari and your colleagues before the meeting begins. Doors open at 6:00 PM; hope to see you there.

NOTICE OF OFFICER ELECTIONS

Under our Bylaws, our President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected for one-year terms commencing on January 1st each year and terminating at the end of December. During our October General Membership meeting, nominations for these positions were opened. Nominations are closed and the names of the members running for office are announced during our November General Membership meeting. The officer election is then conducted during our December General Membership meeting. Any member in good standing is eligible to run for one of these offices or to nominate another member in good standing with his or her consent.

If you are interested in throwing your hat in the ring or in nominating another member for one of these offices, you can do so during our November 20, 2025, General Membership meeting. Alternatively, you can express your interest in running for office or in nominating another member by notifying the undersigned prior to the closure of nominations at jeffreyjoyce@sprintmail.com or by telephone (703) 862-6417 (mobile).

Respectfully,
Jeff Joyce, Nominating Committee Chair

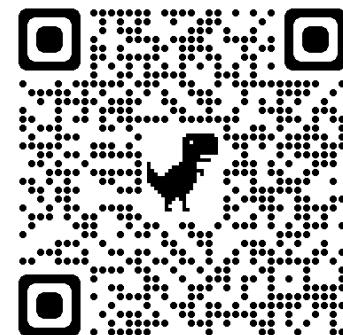


SUPPORT BRCWRT ACTIVITIES

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that relies on your donations to continue our excellent programs and initiatives throughout the year. There are many programs to donate to, including the BRCWRT Scholarship Fund, Preservation efforts, Civil War Trails sign preservation and maintenance, educational programs, and of course the General donation category (which the Round Table uses as a fund to offset various expenses, to help keep our membership dues at a reasonable rate). Please consider your Round Table for tax-deductible donations every year. (We also accept donated Civil War prints to auction for the benefit of the Scholarship Fund.) We appreciate our members very much.

There are a number of ways to make a donation. On the BRCWRT website, click the link labelled "Renew/Donate" and select the link at the bottom of that page. Alternatively, you can give a check to our Treasurer at a membership meeting, or mail it to: BRCWRT Treasurer, PO Box 2147, Centreville VA 20122. Make checks payable to BRCWRT, and be sure to note whether it is for the Scholarship Fund, Preservation Fund, or the General Fund.

Finally, you can scan this QR code with the camera on your smartphone to make a donation.



Bull Run Civil War Round Table



Upcoming 2025-2026 Program of Events

Date	Event
November 20, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jari Villanueva - “24 Notes That Tap Deep Emotions: The Story of America’s Most Famous Bugle Call”
December 11, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Robert Dunkerly - “The Other Surrenders: Spring/Summer 1865”
January 8, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Aaron Siever “Battle of Pickett’s Mill, Georgia, 1864”
February 12, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: William Connery “Civil War Northern Virginia 1861”
March 12, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Tim Duskin - “The Mexican War: Training Ground For The Civil War”
March 21, 2026	Spring Tour 1: “Wolf Run Shoals - The Best Kept Secret in Fairfax County” Tour leaders Jim Lewis and Brian McEnany (rain date April 4th)
April 9, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Dr. Curt Fields “An Evening with Gen. U. S. Grant”
May 14, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Rich Condon - “Emancipation in the Department of The South”
June 13, 2026	Spring Tour 2: “Harper’s Ferry: Bolivar Heights Battleground & Kennedy Farm” Tour leader Kevin Pawlak (rain date June 20th)
June 18, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Patrick Falci - “30th Anniversary of the Making of the Gettysburg Movie”
July 9, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Scott Mingus - “Human Interest Stories from the Gettysburg Campaign”
August 13, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Frank O'Reilly - “Last Days of Stonewall Jackson”
September 10, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Bill Backus - “Opening Manassas: The Iron Brigade, Stonewall Jackson, and the Battle of Brawner Farm, 28 August 1862”
October 8, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Bryan Cheesboro - “The Early Days of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, from Fort Sumter to 1st Bull Run”
October 17/24, 2026	Fall Tour: “Civil War Alexandria (AM) / Fort Ward (PM)” Tour leaders Don Hakenson and Chuck Mauro (rain date TBD)
November 19, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Lisa Samia - “Nameless and Faceless of Manassas And Gettysburg”
December 10, 2026	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jonathan Jones - “Opium Slavery: Civil War Veterans And America’s First Opioid Crisis”

Monthly Meetings in “Black” **Tours/Field Trips & Special RT Events in “Red”** **County or outside sponsored events in “Green”**

IMAGE OF THE MONTH

UNDER FIRE

By Melissa A. Winn

This image appears to be an unremarkable photograph of a Union camp at first glance. Close examination of the picture, taken by photographers Philip Haas and Washington Peale, reveals a different story - it's a photo of combat from the Civil War! The image was taken on Morris Island, S.C., and shows Union ships in action firing against Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor on September 8, 1863. It is thus one of the first photographs taken that shows actual combat. Bob Zeller, author of the essential book *The Blue and Gray in Black and White* (2005), who spoke to the BRCWRT in September, describes this 4 x 7 inch glass negative as what may be Union Army photographers Haas & Peale's "single greatest photographic contribution to the visual history of the war [and which] was not recognized for what it was for more than 140 years ... It wasn't even published in a book until 2000."

Zeller notes "more than fifty people are visible standing on the beach, but no one is facing the camera. All peer up the beach toward Charleston Harbor, riveted by the spectacle before them. Smoke erupts from the port side of the New Ironsides, hugs the surface of the water, and then arcs hundreds of feet into the sky. When Charleston historian Jack Thomson first saw this image some years ago, he noticed the smoke and was drawn deeper into the scene ... When Thomson had the image enlarged, he found the five monitors [the Passaic, Montauk, Nahant, Patapsco, and Lehigh], their smokestacks and distinctive cylindrical turrets clearly outlined at water level."

Thomson added, after some research, that the view was taken at maximum low tide, at about 10:00 a.m. on September 8, 1863. The image is housed at the Library of Congress, where it's labeled "Photo shows tents and soldiers on beach of Morris Island. In distance, ironclads, including USS New Ironsides and five monitor-class warships are in action against Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie in Charleston harbor."



Photo credit: Library of Congress

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S CONSTITUTION AND THE CONFEDERATE CONSTITUTION

By Tim Duskin

In his talk before the Bull Run Civil War Round Table on June 26, John Hennessy said that the only two differences between the U.S. Constitution and the Confederate Constitution were that the Confederate Constitution preserved slavery in perpetuity. In 1991, Dr. Marshall L. DeRosa, a Professor of Political Science at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, published a book entitled *The Confederate Constitution of 1861: An Inquiry into American Constitutionalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press) which was a thorough study of the Confederate Constitution and contrasted it with the U.S. Constitution at great length. DeRosa contends that to reduce the differences between the U.S. and Confederate Constitutions to one merely concerning slavery "is to slight a crucial period of American constitutional development."

DeRosa cites a number of differences between the two and contends that they stem from the differences which began between the Federalists, who supported ratification of the U.S. Constitution, and the Whigs (who were called the Antifederalists by the Federalists), who opposed its ratification. These differences continued between that time and the Civil War between the Federalist, then the Whig and the Republican Parties, who supported broad interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, on the one hand, and the Jeffersonian party, originally called the Republican Party and later changed to the Democratic Party, which supported strict interpretation of it. Although the latter was never called that, it is called the Democratic-Republican Party in history books today to allay any confusion of it with the later Republican Party started in the 1850's. Similarly, the Federalists and Whigs during the ratification of the U.S. Constitution were not the same as the later Federalist and Whig Parties which bore the same names. DeRosa shows that the differences between these two outlooks were seen in the debates in the U.S. Congress before the Civil War between William H. Seward on the side of the North and John C. Calhoun on the side of the South. The Federal Government had funded internal improvements in the North, which the South mostly paid for in its taxes. The Confederate Constitution was designed to prevent this sort of occurrence.

DeRosa says of the differences which developed between the two sections, "Northerners insisted upon a model of federalism consisting of a national community of individuals, with sovereignty being a national phenomenon – that is, nationalism – whereas Southerners adhered to a model consisting of a community of states, with the citizens in their respective states functioning as the repositories of sovereignty and thereby controlling the bulwarks of their social and economic interests – that is, state sovereignty." When the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was incorporated into Article VI of the Confederate Constitution, they changed "or to the people" to "or to the people thereof" to reflect this. When the Ninth Amendment was incorporated, "of the several states" was added to "by the people". The Confederate Constitution incorporates this phrase in several other places as well. It also left other rights to be enumerated in state constitutions.

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In contrast to its U.S. counterpart, the Preamble to the Confederate Constitution begins, "We, the people of the Confederate States, each State acting in its sovereign and independent character, in order to form a permanent Federal Government." This shows that their Constitution was a compact between states and not a consolidated Union.

In the Confederate Preamble, the general welfare clause was omitted because of the way it had been misused to invoke the granting of powers to the Federal Government not specified in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. This section specified in what areas the Federal Government had authority "to promote the general welfare." DeRosa states that "the C.S.A. Constitution has a covenant component, establishing a central government held together by the consent and good faith of its members, not by coercion." The Confederate Preamble also invoked "the favor and guidance of Almighty God," which the U.S. Constitution did not do. It is not until the very end of the U.S. Constitution, after Article VII, that God is mentioned, and He is not invoked there. Confederate Colonel Thomas R.R. Cobb, commander of Cobb's Legion, said that the Confederate Constitution "acknowledged the overruling providence of God."

DeRosa states, "The C.S.A. framers had little confidence in the internal checks without state rights." Article I, Section 2, Clause 5 of the Confederate Constitution gave the states the power to impeach Confederate officials within their boundaries. This made the Confederate Government more accountable to the states. In the U.S. Constitution, it takes two thirds of the states or Congress to call a convention to amend the Constitution. The Confederate Constitution allowed this to be done by three states. And whereas the U.S. Constitution requires a vote of two-thirds of the states for ratification, the Confederate Constitution required a three-fourths vote. Thus, greater unanimity was required, which is something Calhoun argued for.

The Confederate Constitution did prohibit any interference with slavery by the Confederate Government. However, it is silent with regard to any action which states can take regarding slavery, including its abolition in that state. Article I, Section 10 lists all the things states are prohibited from doing, and there is no mention of slavery there. It did prohibit the funding of internal improvements by the Confederate Government, making it strictly a state matter. The issue of the Federal Government funding internal improvements in the Northern states before the war was one which the Southern states had objected to. They felt that it forced the Southern states to pay for those improvements.

If the Confederate Constitution did function to preserve slavery in perpetuity, as Hennessy maintained, it would have prohibited any action against it by the states. It also prohibited "the importation of Negroes of the African race from any country other than the slaveholding states or Territories of the United States of America" in Article I, Section 9, Clause 1. Clause 2 stated, "Congress shall also have power to prohibit the introduction of slaves from any State not a member of, or Territory not belonging to, this Confederacy." If the Confederate Constitution wanted to perpetuate slavery, what better way would there be to do so than to reintroduce importation of slaves?

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The Confederate Constitution also permitted the admission of free states to the Confederacy and some in the Confederacy hoped that its connection to states of the Midwest by way of the Mississippi River would encourage some of those states to join it. Thus, slavery was to be a state matter with which the Confederate Government could not interfere. Nor were states required to maintain slavery. In debate in the U.S. Congress in 1859, Senator Albert G. Brown of Mississippi summarized this position by saying that "each State is sovereign within its own limits; and that each for itself can abolish or establish slavery for itself."

In his speech to Congress in November 1864, President Jefferson Davis said:

"Viewed merely as property, and therefore as the subject of impressment, the service or labor of the slave has been frequently claimed for short periods in the construction of defensive work. The slave, however, bears another relation to the State – that of a person Whenever the entire property in the service of the slave is thus acquired by the Government, the question is presented by what tenure should he be held. Should he be retained in servitude, or should his emancipation be held out to him as a reward for faithful service, or should it be granted at once on the promise of such service; and if emancipated, what action should be taken to secure for the freedman the permission of the State from which he was drawn to reside within its limits after the close of public service? ... The policy of engaging to liberate the negro on the discharge after service faithfully rendered seems to me preferable to that of granting immediate manumission, or that of retaining him in servitude."

The fact that Davis struggled with these questions shows that the matter is more complicated than Hennessy suggested. Davis was also encouraged by General Robert E. Lee's suggestion that slaves should be allowed the opportunity to earn their freedom by serving in the Confederate army. Thus, states could be allowed to offer slaves freedom and even citizenship for their service in the army.

In Article IV, Section 3, Clause 3, the Confederate Constitution did prohibit abolishing slavery in territories, which were under the jurisdiction of the Confederate Government. Thus, the territories lacked the sovereignty which the states possessed. While the allegation has been made by some that the Confederate Constitution was premised upon a "landed slavocracy," such a "slavocracy" was given no constitutional status.

Whereas the U.S. Constitution allowed naturalization to be performed at any level of government, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4 of the Confederate Constitution gave exclusive authority over naturalization to the Confederate Government. Thus, the states were divested of power over citizenship. While the Confederate Constitution allowed for the establishment of a Supreme Court and other courts on the Confederate Government level, as does the U.S. Constitution, the Confederate Congress never did establish these. Thus, all courts in the Confederacy were on the state and local level. It was feared that Confederate courts could encroach on state sovereignty, as was felt by the Southern states before the war concerning Federal courts. It was also felt that

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court decisions at the state level would reflect interpretation of constitutional law in such a manner as to represent the consensus of the community. Judges at the state and local level were subject to the electoral process, unlike Supreme Court justices, which were appointed for life. Article III, Section 2, Clause 1 of the Confederate Constitution limited the judicial power of Confederate courts (which were never established) to "all cases arising under this Constitution," whereas the U.S. Constitution says "judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity." (Article III, Section 2, Clause 1) Under the Confederate Constitution, judicial power of Confederate courts "did not extend to cases between a state and citizens of another state, unless the state was the plaintiff, whereas originally under the U.S. model the judicial power extended to cases between a "State and citizens of another State" (Article III, section 2), which jurisdiction was later qualified to exclude suits in law and equity initiated by "citizens of another State or by citizens of subjects of any foreign State" (Eleventh Amendment). (DeRosa) The Confederate Constitution also added the prohibition, "no State shall be sued by a citizen or subject of any foreign State", which is not in the U.S. Constitution.

A most important difference between the two constitutions is in the area of separation of powers. The system of checks and balances was strengthened in the Confederate Constitution over what it was in the U.S. Constitution. In the Confederate Constitution, the executive branch was given representation in Congress, which more greatly facilitated communication and cooperation between the legislative and executive branches. The President was given the power of line-item veto, which was subject to two-thirds approval by Congress, to prevent, in DeRosa's words, "what they perceived to be legislative abuses of the appropriations process." The Confederate Constitution placed the initiative for appropriations in the executive department, whereas it is in the House of Representatives in the U.S. Constitution. The Confederate Constitution also limited the President to a single six-year term. DeRosa said of this, "Every six years the Confederacy would have a new executive branch of government, thereby offsetting the advantages of incumbency not only of the President but also that of the entrenched national bureaucracy whose interests are so closely linked to an ever-expanding national government."

The Confederate Constitution also said that "the expenses of the Post Office Department ... shall be paid out of its own revenues," unlike in the U.S. Constitution, where it is subsidized with tax dollars.

While there was support among the Federalists, who wrote the U.S. Constitution itself, for the Federal Government to exercise broad national powers, the Whigs, or Antifederalists, did not want this and they wrote and were behind the Bill of Rights in order to prevent this. The Tenth Amendment put limits on the powers of the Federal Government, which they desired. The Confederacy saw this as the original Constitutional order and attempted to further perfect this kind of an order in the Confederate Constitution. The debates between the antebellum Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans reflected the earlier debates between the Antifederalists and Federalists respectively concerning Constitutional construction and sovereignty.

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The Southern Democrats sought a limited Federal Government and state sovereignty, whereas the Northern Republicans sought a more powerful Federal Government and national supremacy over the states. The contrast between the Confederate Constitution and the Lincoln Administration reflects this as well. DeRosa says that the Confederate "Constitution is essentially a traditional Whig-Antifederalist document, designed not to thwart republicanism (government premised upon the consent of its citizenry) but to secure the states from uncontrollable and perhaps authoritarian central government." He also states, "The reactionary Confederate framers were cognizant of this ongoing transformation and aimed at a restoration of Antifederalists' constitutional principles regarding the nature of American federalism."

IN MEMORY OF DON PFANZ

Recent months have seen the passing of a number of distinguished and highly respected authorities on the Civil War, many of whom have been quite familiar to our Bull Run Civil War Round Table. The latest is Don Pfanz, an author, historian and steadfast preservationist, who passed away from glioblastoma (brain cancer) on September 2nd, 2025, at the age of 67. The Central Virginia Battlefield Trust posted the following obituary:

"His commitment to history and preservation, as well as his kindness and easy smile left a lasting impression all who knew him, and the preservation community in general. In remembering Don, former colleague and fellow NPS historian Frank O'Reilly stated 'his legacy is on a hundred fields where visitors can walk hallowed ground, touch history, and be touched by history.'"

"In 1987, while working as a historian at Petersburg National Battlefield, Don wrote a letter to several colleagues expressing concern over the destruction of battlefield lands in Chantilly, located in northern Virginia. Don's letter called for the creation of an organization "to preserve battlefield land by direct purchase" — a call that led to the creation of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites and the start of the modern Civil War battlefield preservation movement."

"Born in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Don was a graduate of the College of William and Mary. In his 32-year career with the National Park Service, he worked at three parks: Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Petersburg National Battlefield, and Fort Sumter National Monument. He retired in 2013. In 2021, CVBT awarded Don the Ralph A. Happel Preservation Award for his commitment to Civil War history and his early work in the creation of the modern preservation movement."

Current BRCWRT members have great memories of working with Don Pfanz. Treasurer Joe Young said "He took me on a private tour of North Anna a couple of years ago and was a knowledgeable and very capable CW expert. We're losing the good ones." Past President Mark Trbovich added "I loved the guy and worked with him putting up the Stony Lonesome sign I wrote at Greenwich, VA. His Ewell book is a must read for Prince William County Civil War folks to learn about our hometown General. Don's works will never be forgotten. So sad to see so many die long before their time." The BRCWRT adds its condolences to the family of Don Pfanz.

BOOK REVIEW

MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE H. SHARPE AND THE CREATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IN THE CIVIL WAR

By Don Richardson

If you are like me, you enter a used book shop the way a kid enters a candy store. Or as Brother Gump would say, "life is like a box of chocolates – you never know what you're gonna get". Some of my best acquisitions have been found while randomly cruising the aisles at McKay's Used Books in Manassas, and the best part is that you find new or nearly-new items for just a couple of dollars.

This particular book just leaped off the shelves into my arms. I spent my entire 40-year career as a defense contractor in various corners of the Intelligence Community, so I knew this one would be an enjoyable read. I was not disappointed. The author, Peter G. Tsouras, is a retired Military All-Source Intelligence Analyst and Lt. Colonel in the Army Reserve. He knows this field like few others. While the focus is on the life of George Sharpe, the book also introduces many of his collaborators, many of whom have never been documented before.



Historians tend to focus on battles, commanders, and unit histories. The role of staff officers gets relatively little attention. Yet Sharpe may have been the Civil War's most valuable staff officer, responsible for providing Union commanders with accurate and useful intelligence from 1863 to the end of the war. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant came to rely on his reports heavily.

Like many other commanders, Fighting Joe Hooker has had his strengths and weaknesses discussed at length. But he made one extremely astute move after taking command of the Army of the Potomac in early 1863; he recruited then-colonel Sharpe to move from command of the 120th NY Volunteers (the regiment he had raised) to a staff assignment to create the first all-source military intelligence function – the Bureau of Military Information (BMI). Sharpe was an ideal choice. A respected lawyer from Kingston NY, he had the organizational skills to create something new in the Army of the Potomac: a professional intelligence organization.

Starting in February 1863, he put together a team of officers and civilian analysts that recruited spies and conducted reconnaissance, and by the time of Chancellorsville in May of that year, they had assembled a fairly accurate Order of Battle (OOB) for Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army. All-source Intelligence is what it implies: it includes reports from agents behind enemy lines, reports from cavalry units scouting the opposition, intercepted communications, and what today we call "open source" materials – Confederate pickets often traded Richmond newspapers to their Federal counterparts in exchange for coffee or other desirable items. Confederate prisoners and escaped slaves were routinely interrogated to flesh out current OOB tables.

The operations of the BMI paid dividends almost immediately, allowing what in modern terms is called "intelligence preparation of the battlefield" (IPB). But the

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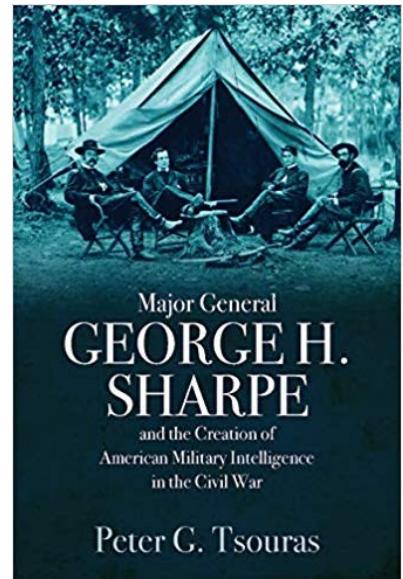
GENERAL GEORGE H. SHARPE

crowning moment came at Gettysburg, where the BMI's accurate accounting of Lee's OOB, combined with operational and strategic insights derived from rebel documents captured by Captain Ulric Dahlgren, enabled General Meade to make several key decisions with confidence. As the war continued, and General Grant settled on operations against Richmond, the BMI continued obtaining critical information from such secret agents as Elizabeth Van Lew.

Tsouras makes the critical point that the Confederate high command had no organization similar to the BMI, with the result that commanders often had to try to analyze and piece together scraps of information in an incomplete picture. The Confederates did have agents operating behind Union lines, of course, but there was no central body responsible for gathering and reporting to the commanders.

Sharpe would always count his wartime service as his proudest moment, but he had quite a career after the war. He became a powerful Republican politician in New York State, crossed paths with many prominent Americans, had close relations with Presidents Grant and Arthur, and worked to increase the civil rights of African-Americans. He was generally liked and even respected by many of his opponents. Students of post-Civil War politics will enjoy the latter parts of the book.

Major General George H. Sharpe and the Creation of American Military Intelligence in the Civil War was published by Casemate in 2018. It can be found on Amazon, among other places, for about \$13. Reader beware: at 592 pages (which includes 17 appendices, for the true scholars among us) this is not a book you can read in one sitting. But it is definitely worthwhile.



Peter G. Tsouras

Join the Charge: Help Lead Our Tech Front!

We're on the lookout for a tech-savvy member to be our meeting MVP! Help us run slides, fix glitches, and keep our presentations humming. If you love gadgets and history, this is your moment to shine — Civil War meets Silicon Valley!

For more info, please email melissaannwinn@gmail.com or speak to any member of the Executive Committee at the meeting!

9TH ANNUAL BRCWRT PICNIC
SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 AT THE WINERY AT BULL RUN
Photos By Janet Greentree



Nancy Anwyll & Doug Cox



Jim Lewis



Peter Andrews & Saundra Cox



Mark Whitenton



Joe Young & Mark Whitenton serving
Chuck Mauro & Don Hakenson



Jeff Joyce & Jim Lewis serve lunch



Debbie Whitenton
(Cake Lady and Planner)



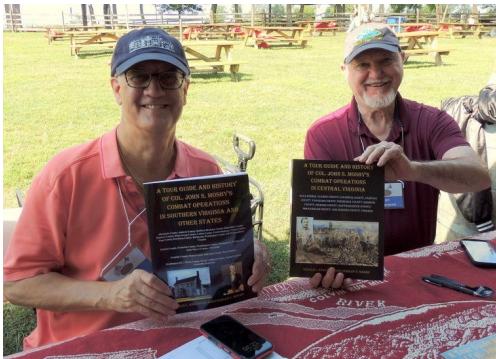
Nancy Buckley, Dennis Pick, Rebecca Pick, Joe Young,
Jayne Young, Jim Lewis, Mike Buckley



Nancy Anwyl, Doug Cox, Susan Claffey,
Gwen Wyttenbach, Wendy Swanson, Saundra Cox



Jack Miller, Yvonne Knowles, Mark Knowles



Chuck Mauro & Don Hakenson sell their books



Harlan Lenius, Diep Estey, Delbert Estey



Sharon Lenius, Patrick McGinty, Harlan Lenius



Margie Giragosian, Jim Giragosian,
Manassas Battlefield Speaker Joelle Taylor



David Peterson, Kay Peterson, Annmarie Baribeau, Alan Baribeau, Barbara Rose, Paul & Alice Bresnahan



Laurie Allen, Mark Allen, Mike Shannon, Mike Rumsey



Gary & Teresa Haskins, Chris Straub, Sam Laudenslager, Mary Straub, Rose Nelson, Randy Moller



Sue Jones, Alan Day, Lynne Garvey-Hodge, Denny Jones, Ed Wenzel, Brian McEnany



Don Richardson, Dan Lundein, Gene Schmiel, Fred Eckstein, John Myers, Mark Whitenton



Mark Walker, Blake Myers, Melissa Winn



Photo Assistant Pete Andrews
& Janet Greentree (Ms. Rebelle)
Photographer



Manassas Battlefield Speaker
Anthony Trusso



History Girls Nancy Anwyll,
Janet Greentree, Lynne Garvey-Hodge,
Gwen Wytenbach

BRCWRT thanks *The Winery At Bull Run* for hosting another great picnic!





**THE BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
P.O. Box 2147, Centreville, VA 20122**

<http://www.bullruncwrt.org>

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Thank you for your continued interest in the BRCWRT!

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Individual: \$20.00

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You may use PayPal by going to http://brcwrt.org/?page_id=962 and then emailing this form to BRCWRTtreasurer@gmail.com. Note that \$1 is added to cover the PayPal fee.

-OR-

You may pay by check, made payable to: BRCWRT (Bull Run Civil War Round Table) and give the form and check to the President or Treasurer at a General Membership meeting.

-OR-

You may mail this form and the check to:

**BRCWRT Treasurer
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Centreville, VA 20122**

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Are there any BRCWRT activities you would like to help with (tours, selling used books, member recruitment, newsletter articles, annual picnic)?

Do you have any suggestions for additional BRCWRT activities? _____