# The Camp Olden Gazette

## News from the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table

Winter 2014

#### President's Gavel.

First and foremost I would like to thank our members and especially our volunteers for making the past year another successful and enjoyable year and extend best wishes to all for the holiday season. For this issue I have asked our Vice President to provide a few appropriate remarks.

Happy Holidays!

Your obedient servant,

Bruce. ♦

## From the Office of the Vice President

William E. Moore, III Vice President Camp Olden CWRT

Holiday Greetings to all our members and friends. A reminder: our December meeting refreshments will be provided by the Camp Olden Board of Directors. Bring your appetites and a friend. The Program will start at 7 pm.

Our President tells me he is "hard at work" lining up speakers for 2015. Speaking of the New Year, don't forget to attend our Winter Soiree - a good way to help cope with the letdown after Christmas and New Year's. Information on this event will be found elsewhere in the newsletter.

Previewing events for the coming year, Bruce Sirak has Dr. James Green director of NASA's Planetary Science Division returning as a speaker. His topic is to be announced later. He did an excellent presentation last year on the Civil War Balloon Corps. Al Barbano is working on outside events for the next year. I am looking forward to the activities he is planning. A calendar of these will be forthcoming.

Remember the Blue and Gray, our ancestors, whose titanic struggle set the course for our nation.

Sincerely,

Bill Moore ♦

### Camp Olden CWRT Winter Camp Soiree

The Camp Olden CWRT will be hosting a Winter Camp Soiree on Saturday, **January 10, 2015**, at the American Legion Post #31, 1490 South Olden Avenue, Trenton, NJ. Musical entertainment will be provided by Mike Plunkett. The menu will be a buffet style dinner featuring food from Fred & Pete's. The price is \$18.00 per person. The dress will be casual but period dress would be welcome. Please RSVP with payment by December 20<sup>th</sup> to Connie Davis, 109 Endsleigh Ct, Robbinsville, NJ 08691. Make checks payable to COCWRT. Your invitation is attached to the newsletter email.

The Soiree Committee is looking for donations of small items that can be used as prizes for the Trivia Game. This is a great way to "re-gift"! Bring your contributions to the December 4<sup>th</sup> General Meeting or, if you cannot bring it until the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, email Kim at <a href="kdaly14@aol.com">kdaly14@aol.com</a> or Al at <a href="mailto:ajbarbano@gmail.com">ajbarbano@gmail.com</a> and let us know what you will be adding to the prize collection. Hope to see you there!

Soiree committee - Al Barbano, Bob Dunphy and Kim Daly ◆



#### Civil War Visits:

Our members did some traveling over the past few months. Following are "field reports".

### **Presidential Trip**

Submitted by Sue DeSiver

Gary and I began a ten day October road trip at the Civil War mecca of Gettysburg attending the Friends of Gettysburg two day Fall Muster. Included were battlefield tours and a museum talk.

The next stop was Shenandoah National Park for several ranger hikes and a tour of President Hoover's Rapidan camp, his personal presidential retreat. This is a ranger program that takes a 14 passenger van to the camp. You can also hike in.

The next two days base camp was Charlottesville, seeing Jefferson's Monticello, and Madison's Montpelier. We recommend the two hour "Constitution Tour" at Montpelier.



Appomattox Court House

Moving on, the next day was Poplar Forest, Jefferson's private retreat, and Appomattox Court House. A highlight was Volunteer Warren Taylor's outstanding talk on the surrender. He had memorized each of Lee's and Grant's letters to one another, and wove them into the story of Lee's surrender.

We paid tribute to George Washington at Mt. Vernon, taking both the garden and slavery tours.



Ford's Theater

Finishing up the trip in Washington D.C., we

visited Ford's Theater and museum, then walked to the National Portrait Gallery to view the civil war exhibits. Docent Kelly Person, retired air force, gave an excellent history tour in this museum, where many docents focus strictly upon art. He took us to see presidents from Washington, Jackson and Lincoln, through Reagan and the Bushes, with interesting stories for all.



Arlington House

Our last stop before home was Arlington National Cemetery. After visiting President Kennedy's grave, we walked up the hill to Arlington House - Lee's ancestral home which has been renovated and reopened to the public for about two years. It was once owned by George Washington Parke Custis who was the step-grandson and adopted son of George Washington, and father-in-law of Robert E. Lee.

Although we set out to see the civil war, the national park, and some history sites, along the way we realized how every day had a "presidential" reference! •

### Fall Muster

Contributed by Corinne Mazzocchi

The recent Friends of Gettysburg Battlefield "Fall Muster" gave detailed, often intense, lectures and tours. The weekend was interesting and educating.

The Friday night lecture for all Muster participants, entitled "A Museum for All – Creating Civil War Galleries for Multiple Audiences", explored philosophy behind the development of museums and specifics for the Gettysburg Museum. Gettysburg has large numbers of visitors of all ages and various amounts of Civil War knowledge. A museum goal is to offer newcomers an introduction –the movie, the cyclorama, overview exhibits – and give the more experienced visitor options to explore the site in detail – the Ranger and Battlefield Guides

tours, and changing exhibits. The museum wants people to want to return and expand their experience

Saturday's program offered several tour/lecture choices, everyone selecting one morning and one afternoon. Our morning choice was "Candy's Brigade at Gettysburg" – "Our Boys Fought Like Madmen." The guide discussed the personalities, the terrain and the action that swirled around Culp's Hill. The afternoon tour was "Barksdale's Charge" – "The Grandest Charge Made by Mortal Man" which covered the Confederate advance across the Emmitsburg Road through the Peach Orchard to the Trostle Farm and Plum Run. We continued our history weekend with dinner at the Cashtown Inn.



**Hampton Plantation** 

The following day we went back in time to Hampton Plantation Estate near Towson, Maryland, which, before the Civil War, had the largest number of slaves in the state. Today both the battlefield and this estate are peaceful places. It is difficult but necessary to realize the atrocities that occurred on these now lovely fields. ◆

### Civil War Sesquicentennial -

Below are some of the major events which occurred 150 years ago from December of 1864 to February of 1865:

December 4, 1864 - Waynesborough

December 5-7 - Murfreesboro / Wilkinson

December 7-27 - Fort Fisher

December 13 - Fort McAllister II

December 15-16 - Nashville

December 17-18 Marion

December 20-21 Saltville

January 13-15, 1865 - Fort Fisher

February 3 - Rivers' Bridge

February 5-7 - Hatcher's Run / Dabney's Mill

February 12-22 - Wilmington / Sugar Loaf Hill ◆

### James Harlan Comes Home

Submitted by William E. Moore, III Vice President Camp Olden CWRT.

When I received my "Purple and White" Publication from Iowa Wesleyan College, this week, I read this interesting Civil War tidbit, and wanted to share it with those of you in the Camp Olden Newsletter. It is from the Volume 56, Number 2, Fall 2014. - Bill Moore

James Harlan, President of Iowa Wesleyan University 1869-1870, was also President of the college when it was Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute 1853-1855. Harlan was a 4 term United States Senator from Iowa. During the civil war he was a close personal friend and adviser to Abraham Lincoln. Harlan was appointed by Lincoln, as Secretary of the Interior. His daughter, Mary, married President Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln in 1868.

The Statue is a bronze literal representation of James Harlan as Statesman. It is 8' 3" tall, and weights 2500 lbs. Designed by Iowa Native Nellie Walker. Commissioned by the Iowa legislature in 1907 for \$5,000, the statue stood in the National Capital for 104 years, as part of the National Statuary Hall collection from 1910 until this year (2014) when it was returned to Iowa. It was replaced in DC by another Iowa Statue remembering Agriculture.



Harlan family descendants were in attendance August 28, 2014, at the ceremony to honor his legacy. It was placed in front of the chapel at Iowa Wesleyan College. Today his statue is in Mount Pleasant, in the place he always viewed as home. He is buried in Forest Home Cemetery, not far from the statue. Harlan was a life long Methodist minister and educator. Dignitaries included the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, US Senator, and present president of Iowa Wesleyan. ◆

### Who Am I?



I was one of the most disliked generals of the Civil War, upsetting many on both sides of the conflict. I graduated from Colby College in Maine in 1838, and was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in 1840, where I established a large criminal practice. I was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1853, and then to the Senate of the Commonwealth in 1859. While in office, I attended the Democratic convention where I voted for Jefferson Davis running for the presidential nomination as well as supporting other candidates such as John C. Breckinridge. I entered the Massachusetts Militia in 1839, and was promoted to brigadier general in 1855 even though I had no formal military training.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, I played an important role because I and the Massachusetts were some of the first troops to reach Washington DC, protecting the capital in case Maryland seceded. I was appointed a major general on May 16, 1861, being one of the first appointed by President Abraham Lincoln. I first saw action at the battle of Big Bethel, where I was defeated. I then commanded Fort Monroe, where I became the first to identify slaves who ran away into Union lines as "contraband of war," despite the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. In August of 1861, I led a successful amphibious assault on the Hatteras Inlet in North Carolina, and moved onto New Orleans in May, after the city had already surrendered to Admiral David G. Farragut. It was during this time that I would gain many of my enemies.

Once in New Orleans, I was appointed as military governor, and commanded the city in rather controversial ways. Although I was able to bring order to the city, I became known as one who would pilfer goods of the Southern households I was watching. I issued Order 28 during this time

period, which stated that any lady in New Orleans who showed contempt for Union soldiers would effectively be treated as though they were a prostitute. This law drew great controversy in both the North and South, caused Confederate president Jefferson Davis to label me an outlaw. I was removed from this position in December of 1862, and given command of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina in November of 1863, which would become known as the Army of the James. While commanding this force, I performed poorly during the Bermuda Hundred campaign, allowing Confederate general P.G.T. Beauregard to slow me down with an inferior force. I went on to fail once again at Fort Fisher, North Carolina, and was ordered by Union general Ulysses S. Grant to return home to await orders. On November 30, 1865, I resigned my commission.

I returned to politics, and was elected governor of Massachusetts in 1882 after several unsuccessful campaigns. In 1878, I was again elected to Congress, and was a presidential candidate during the election of 1884.◆

Source: Civil War Trust.

Who Am I? (Answer on page 11) ♦

Following is an interview with James M. McPherson which appeared in the *NY Times Sunday Book Review:* 

## James M. McPherson: By the Book



The author, most recently, of "Embattled Rebel: Jefferson Davis as Commander in Chief" says that coming of age in Minnesota in the '50s, he saw the South as "a mysterious, almost foreign land."

What books are currently on your night stand? - Ron Chernow, "Washington: A Life," and Daniel James Brown, "The Boys in the Boat." In very different ways, these books chronicle unlikely triumphs over seemingly insuperable odds to found a nation from 1775 to 1797 and to win an Olympic gold medal in 1936.

What was the last truly great book you read? - James Oakes, "Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865." A powerful analytical narrative of the confluence of politics and war that ended America's shame and trauma.

Who are the best historians writing today? - Bernard Bailyn, David Brion Davis, Gordon Wood, Eric Foner, David McCullough, David Hackett Fischer. In elegant prose, based on impeccable research, they have covered the broad sweep of American history from the early colonial settlements through Truman's administration.

What's the best book ever written about the Civil War? - The best book is actually an eight-volume series published from 1947 to 1971, by Allan Nevins: "Ordeal of the Union," "The Emergence of Lincoln" and "The War for the Union." It is all there — the political, economic, social, diplomatic and military history of the causes, course and consequences of the war, written in the magisterial style for which Nevins was famous.

Do you have a favorite biography of a Civil Warera figure? - Jean Edward Smith, "Grant." A lucid and empathetic account of the victorious general and underrated president that helped usher in the current revival of Grant's reputation.

What are the best military histories? - John Keegan's "The Face of Battle" is perhaps the most military history ever important establishing a new way of embedding armies and warfare in broader historical currents. Craig L. Symonds's books on Civil War generals and admirals, on naval history and on World War II entitle him to first rank among military historians. Stephen W. Sears and Gordon C. Rhea have written the best campaign and battle histories for the Civil War, while Gary W. Gallagher and Joseph T. Glatthaar have written the best studies of armies and commanders. Rick Atkinson's trilogy on the U.S. Army in North Africa and Europe in World War II is beyond compare.

And what are the best books about African-American history? - John Hope Franklin's "From Slavery to Freedom" continues to stand alone as the best general history. Ira Berlin's books on slavery and free blacks in the era of slavery, plus the monumental multivolume series he oversaw, "Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation," are landmarks in the field.

During your many years teaching at Princeton, did you find that students responded differently over time to the history books you assigned? Did their Civil War interests change during that period? - During nearly 40 years of teaching the Civil War era, I saw an increasing interest in the experience of civilians, especially women, and in the impact of the war on communities and families. Two constant favorites over the whole time of my teaching, however, were Solomon Northup's "Twelve Years a Slave" (the book, not the movie), the best firsthand account of slavery, and Michael Shaara's "The Killer Angels," a novel about the battle of Gettysburg that, to my mind, provides the most incisive insights into the various meanings of the war for the men who fought it.

What kind of reader were you as a child? - I devoured my quota of comic books as a child in the 1940s, but my earliest years as a reader coincided with World War II. My uncle was a fighter pilot in the European theater, so I also read a good many boys' books and even adult books about the Army Air Corps in the war; two that stick in my memory were "Barry Blake of the Flying Fortress" and "God Is My Co-Pilot." By my teenage years, my interests turned to sports, and I read and reread a series of novels about Chip Hilton, a high school athletic hero.

If you had to name one book that made you who you are today, what would it be? - C. Vann Woodward, "Origins of the New South, 1877-1913." Coming of age in Minnesota in the 1950s, I saw the South as a mysterious, almost foreign land. Woodward's book, and his other books and essays, helped to demystify the region. I went on to do my graduate work under his tutelage at Johns Hopkins, which helped launch my career as a historian.

If you could require the president to read one book, what would it be? - Doris Kearns Goodwin, "The Bully Pulpit," which shows how Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft dealt with recalcitrant Congresses — sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

You're hosting a literary dinner party. Which three writers are invited? - Mark Twain, John Dos Passos and William Faulkner. Primarily writers of fiction, these disparate personalities were also, in effect, historians of American life whose novels contained profound insights on the cultures that they both embraced and rejected. Their dinner table conversation would add spice to the menu.

Disappointing, overrated, just not good: What book did you feel as if you were supposed to like, and didn't? Do you remember the last book you put down without finishing? - Edward Gibbon, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Believing that every historian should be familiar with this classic, I set out to read all six volumes but have yet to finish the first, wearied by the dreary cycles of palace revolts, murders and assassinations chronicled in sometimes impenetrable prose.

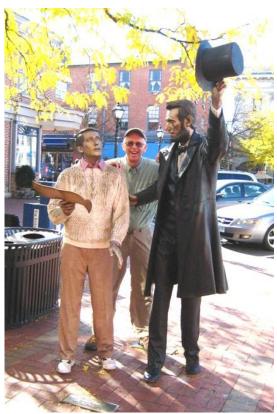
What books are you embarrassed not to have read yet? - A. Scott Berg, "Wilson," a biography of a famous Princetonian by a prominent Princeton alumnus, which everybody connected with Princeton should read; and Winston Churchill's six volumes on "The Second World War," the classic account of that cataclysm by one of its most famous participants. Churchill's volumes have been gathering dust on my bookshelves for many years, a source of considerable embarrassment that I hope soon to remedy.

What do you plan to read next? - Ron Chernow, "Alexander Hamilton," the ideal follow-up to his biography of George Washington. •

### Where Am I?

Where Am I? features one or more photographs showing distinct aspects of Civil War. Your job is to identify the location(s). (Your images from your travels would be most welcome for future issues.) Here's an Editor's choice for this issue:

Our editors recently ran into Abe and a friend. Do you know where? (We know. -- The first one is easy.)



Location #1



Location #2

Where Are We? (Answers on page 11) ♦

## It's Membership Renewal Time!

Below is your renewal form for 2015 membership in the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table. New members can use this form also with, of course, the same discount.

Camp Olden Civil War Round Table and Museum Renewal & New Membership Application			
Name: Address:			
Birthdays: Telephone #: E-Mail Address:			
Membership:	Single (\$30*)	Senior	Single (\$25*) Student (\$15*)
Family (\$40*) Senior Husband & Wife (\$30*)			
* If dues are paid before or at the February meeting, there is a \$5.00 discount.			
Mail Completed Application with payment to: Camp Olden Civil War Round Table P. O. Box 10565 Hamilton NJ 08650		OR	Ms. Connie Davis 1090 Endsleigh Court Robbinsville NJ 08691

## **Upcoming Speakers:**

The Camp Olden CWRT meets at the Hamilton Public Library located at 1 Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. Drive; Hamilton, NJ at 7:00 PM. See you there!

**December 4<sup>th</sup>** - Dennis Buttacavoli - **Letters from the Civil War**. This presentation will focus on letters written by two Civil War New Jersey soldiers: Private Robert Aitkin (Company B, 4<sup>th</sup> New Jersey Commissary Sergeant) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Matthew S. Austin (companies G & I, 5<sup>th</sup> New Jersey).

Jan.  $\delta^{th}$  - Walt Lafery -  $9^{th}$  New Jersey and the Bermuda Hundred Campaign

**February** meeting speaker – to be announced. ♦

### Hospitality:

Thanks to all members who help with Hospitality! Following is the list of volunteers for the future.

December – The Board

January – Carole Moore

February – John Maleski

March - Covered Dish

April – Connie Davis & Renee Angel

May – Marilyn & Ted Evan

June – Corinne and Mike Mazzocchi

July – Susan Slowik & Donald Cooper

August – No Meeting

September - Covered Dish

October – Al Barbano

November – *Need Volunteer* 

December – The Board ◆

Following is an article submitted by Camp Olden CWRT member John Maleski:

### David vs. Goliath in North Carolina

By Jamie Malanowski



Lt. William Cushing

In the predawn darkness of Oct. 28, 1864, arguably the greatest feat of arms in American military history was performed on the Roanoke River at Plymouth, N.C. There, in a true David and Goliath contest, a 23-year-old Navy lieutenant named William Cushing virtually single-handedly sank the Albemarle, a Confederate ironclad that threatened to unravel all that Union forces in North Carolina had accomplished in three years of fighting.

The enterprising Confederate Navy built the Albemarle in a cornfield along the Roanoke far inland, and then floated it downriver. The ship debuted in battle on April 19, when it was met by two federal vessels at Plymouth; the Albemarle sank one and damaged the other. The ship's guns then supported an infantry assault on the federal garrison in Plymouth; the rebels recaptured the town the next day.

Two weeks later, the Albemarle was ordered to travel down the Roanoke River to Albemarle Sound, then head south to the New Bern River and on to the town of New Bern, where the ship would meet Confederate infantry. Together they would reprise the successful plan that had ousted the Yankees from Plymouth. Before the Albemarle could exit the Roanoke, however, it was attacked by seven federal ships, including four top-of-the-line gunboats. In the fierce fight that followed, more than 500 shells were fired at the Albemarle; one ship in the union flotilla even rammed the Albemarle at full speed, only to see the ironclad effectively shrug off the haymaker. The Albemarle eventually disengaged and returned to Plymouth,

calling the battle a draw, but it was the Union that was discouraged. "We have no answer for her," lamented one Yankee captain.

Not true; the answer came in the form of a plan from Lieutenant Cushing, who had earned his superiors' attention with a series of audacious raids and bravely fought battles in Virginia and North Carolina. Cushing proposed two plans. One would be a classic cutting-out expedition: he would take 80 men up through the swamps, overpower the crew with pistols and grenades, cut the ship loose, and bring the beast back to the Union fleet. The other would be an attack, using a tug or an India rubber boat that had been fitted with a torpedo, a weapon known to us as a mine, which had to be floated underneath its target and detonated by hand. Although the Navy's top officials assumed this was almost certainly a suicide mission that had little chance of success, they reluctantly ordered Cushing to New York to be outfitted with a suitable ship.

Cushing returned to North Carolina on Oct. 10 and spent just over a fortnight gathering intelligence, assembling volunteers and sharpening his plan. When he learned that the rebels had placed guards on the wreckage of the Southfield, a union ship the Albemarle demolished in April, Cushing added a second boat, whose men would neutralize the pickets on the Southfield.

A false start on Oct. 26 led to a final modification: the muffling of the engine on Cushing's 30-foot cutter, called Picket Boat No. 1. The two boats reached the mouth of the Roanoke, Picket Boat No. 1 towing the other, about 11:30. It was a rainy night, about 65 degrees, and the 40-foot-tall gum and cypress trees that crowded the shore forced a feeling of closeness.

Riding in the prow of his vessel, Cushing was like a puppet master. In his right hand, he held three lines. One was attached to the ankle of the sailor who operated the engine; one pull meant speed up, two pulls meant stop the engines. A second line connected him to an ensign who operated the small howitzer aboard; a tug would mean start firing. The third line was attached to another ensign, who controlled a boom to which was attached the torpedo; a tug would signal him to lower the torpedo. In Cushing's left hand were

two other lines, one that would arm the bomb, another that would detonate it.

Cushing's strong preference would be to cut the ship out — rush the deck, eliminate the sentries, cut the ropes and go. Detonating the torpedo was an iffy proposition; pull the lanyard too softly, and the mechanism wouldn't move; pull it too hard, and the string would detach. If it worked, it would probably kill everyone on the assault team.

Two o'clock came; then 2:30. Up ahead, finally, was the shadow of the Southfield. Cushing expected a rebel challenge at any moment, the click of a musket, a shot, but . . . nothing. Rather than casting off the second boat, Cushing decided to keep it, and use the men to assault the Albemarle. Another five minutes went by; another curve in the river passed. The low lights of Plymouth could be seen now, the dwindling campfires, the lamps in the windows of the sleepless.

And then, there it was suddenly there. Bulky, angular, squarely silhouetted against the wharf, somewhat squattier than any legendary beast ought to be, sleeping the calm, undisturbed sleep of the indestructible. We'll cut this thing out, Cushing thought. We'll steal it dead away.

But no sooner did Cushing move his launch toward the wharf than a sentry called. "Who's there? Who's there? Who goes there?" Then the shooting started.

With the element of surprise lost, Cushing knew that the idea of cutting the ship out was finished. He cast off the second ship, sending its men back to secure the Southfield. He pulled hard on the engineer's lanyard, realized that the need for silence was over, and shouted, "Ahead fast!" The engines roared, the launch fell away, the cutter shot forward toward the iron monster. Around them, the pop of muskets picked up, and bullets began to splash and zing.

Suddenly from the shore there was a *whoomp*, and a tall pile of wood splashed with tar and turpentine was ignited. A warning bonfire, built for this very contingency, leapt to life, turning the riverfront into a flickering orange, shadow-dancing stage. As Cushing sped toward the ship, he could see by this illumination that the rebels had installed a line of defense that he had not expected — a ring of logs,

chained together, encircling the ram in a protective pen about 30 feet from its side, placed there for the very purpose of foiling a torpedo attack.

Cushing ran the cutter up to the ring, oblivious to the increasing gunfire from the shore, and then ran alongside it, examining the chain for a weakness. Turning the wheel hard, he traveled in a wide circle, taking the cutter away from the ship to the darkness of the river's far side, and then spun it again and aimed for the Albemarle. "Full speed!" he shouted, and the light picket boat shot ahead. In the flickering of the flames he could see the rebels on the shore, running in confusion, and in front of that the dark logs, silhouetted against the firelight, their wet, mossy surfaces shining as he came.

Wham! Flying at full speed, the cutter smacked the logs, Cushing hoping that slime atop the timbers would act as a lubricant, and that his momentum would carry him over. It only halfway happened; after impact there was a grinding, tearing sound, and then the launch hung there, stuck halfway over. For a moment, the tableau was frozen, as raiders and rebels alike held their breath and wondered what would happen next. Then Captain Alexander Warley, aboard the Albemarle, shouted, "What boat is that?"

"We'll soon let you know!" Cushing replied and yanked on the lanyard of the howitzer, sending a load of canister against the ironclad, clearing her deck.

And then - tumult. As gunfire erupted from all over the shore, Cushing ordered his men to lower the torpedo into the water. In a moment, a desperate race was on, pitting Cushing, standing patiently in his open boat for his torpedo to float below the knee of the ironclad's armor, where he could then try to get it to explode, against Captain Warley and a gun crew, scrambling to load a cannon and blow Cushing to pieces.

Neither could make their objects move how they wanted. Borne on the current, the torpedo floated and bobbed, as Cushing stood upright in the prow of his cutter, the epitome of cool. A bullet had already taken away the heel of his shoe, another had creased his sleeve. Now a load of buckshot carried away the back of his coat, and still he did not flinch. The torpedo was at the ironclad's hull now, just inches from dipping under the metal

sheets that protected it. At the same moment, the gaping mouth of Warley's gun was not 10 feet from Cushing's head. But the Confederates could not lower the gun far enough to put the mouth of the gun on target; Picket Boat No. 1 was too close; they could depress the angle of the barrel no more. Cushing could hear Warley yelling, "Lower! Lower! Lower!"

And then the torpedo dipped below the water and vanished under the ship.

Just as Cushing pulled the last lanyard in his left hand, he heard Warley scream "Fire!" and then all was lost in sensation: a tremendous earsplitting roar, a screaming hot wind above, the sense of the floor of the cutter vanishing in favor of pure air, and then a smashing wave of water.

The torpedo exploded at the same instant that Warley discharged his gun. The canister flew over the attackers' heads like a swarm of iron bees, costing some their caps but none their lives. Similarly, the torpedo went off imperfectly, with much of the force of the explosion venting outside the ship and into the water, creating a momentary vacuum that sucked in Picket Boat No. 1, and then threw Cushing and his men and a great blast of water flying back toward the surface. But if the explosion wasn't perfect, it was good enough. Warley sent his carpenter to inspect the damage. He soon reported "a hole in her bottom big enough to drive a wagon in." In minutes the ferocious Albemarle was gone. The Beast of the Roanoke River, the Confederacy's most effective ironclad, fell to a man standing in an open boat.

Cushing and his men, jostled and jarred, could not discern what had happened, but they clearly heard calls from the shore for their surrender. "Never!" Cushing cried. "Men, save yourselves," he shouted, and dived into the river.

Over the next hours, as Confederate posses combed the banks of the Roanoke, Cushing swam and skulked down the river. At midmorning he encountered an elderly black man, who was the one who told him the news about the ironclad. "She is dead gone sunk," the man said, "and they will hang you, massa, if they catch you." Around noon, Cushing spotted a rebel patrol. While its attention was distracted, he stole their flat-bottomed skiff and began paddling, and did not

stop. Near 10 o'clock, he reached the safety of the Union fleet, and with his last ounce of energy, he called "Ship ahoy!" to the nearest vessel, the Valley City. The men aboard did not know what to expect; they knew that there had been an explosion, and they assumed that Cushing had been lost. When the exhausted and bleeding mariner was hauled onto the deck of the Valley City, its captain peered at the nearly inert form. "My God, Cushing," he said, "is this you?"

Cushing nodded. "It is I."

"Is it done?"

"It is done."

Fortified by a little brandy, Cushing made his report to the commanding officer. Soon word spread throughout the fleet. On every ship, rockets were thrown up and all hands were called to cheer the ship. Exhausted and exhilarated, the young lieutenant watched the sky explode in tribute. •



First Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing

William Cushing's brother, First Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing, also fought in the Civil War and was fatally wounded at Gettysburg. He was recently awarded the Medal of Honor. For further information see the links below:

## Medal of Honor for a Civil War Hero 150 Years in the Grave

 $\frac{http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/us/politics/medal-of-honor-for-a-civil-war-hero-150-years-in-the-grave.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&\_r=0$ 

## Civil War Hero Awarded the Medal of Honor at Last

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/07/us/politics/alonzo-cushing-medal-of-honor-civil-war.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad ◆

## Celebration of General Meade's Birthday - Dec 31

Contributed by Carole Lokan Moore

For the last few years, Bill and I have been privileged to participate in the Meade Society "Annual New Year's Eve General Meade Birthday Celebration" at Laurel Hill Cemetery on the outskirts of Philadelphia. The Meade society motto is "Forget Not His Deeds", as they educate the public and school children of Meade's efforts during the Civil War.

General George Gordon Meade was born on December 31, 1815, (the same date he married his wife in 1840.) in Cadiz, Spain to a diplomat father and a Philadelphia society mother. His masterful victory during the Battle of Gettysburg is well known.

The Celebration begins at the cemetery gatehouse. Some 400+ guests, ladies in period dress and units of Civil War re-enactors fill the staging area. At noon they proceed behind the color guard and Philadelphia Brigade Military Band up the hill to the Meade Family gravesite along the banks of the Schuylkill River. The presentation includes laying of wreaths, speeches by S.U.V.C.W. members and a gun salute from the Honor Guard. In the cold still air, a bugler plays "Taps" which echoes over the river below. Not only does the weather give you chills, but so do the patriotic remembrances for all those who participated in wars to keep our "One Nation Under God. A country as Champagne toast at the gravesite is given with a single voice echoing "Three Cheers for the Union". Hurrah!

Thanks to Meade Society member Rick Mendoza, you can go to YouTube: "General Meade's Birthday Celebration, December 31, 2013" and view last year's event. It's great to see what to expect on You-Tube, but being there as "Taps" echoes off the many tombstones in the historic graveyard, is even better. A champagne brunch follows at the heated gatehouse. Refreshments are free to the public who bear the cold to attend. Raffle tickets are sold to help off-set the cost of food, provided by volunteers from the "Meade Society Commissary". Costumed attire is welcome because the event is covered by several television stations. It is recommended that you "bundle up",

as the wind along the river is brisk which makes the warmth of the Gate House even more welcoming.

Laurel Hill Cemetery, is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Major Garden Cemetery in the United States, where Victorians brought their picnics on Sundays to share with memories of the deceased family. The website is <a href="https://www.TheLaurelHillCemetery.org">www.TheLaurelHillCemetery.org</a>. Set your GPS to 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia Pa. If you need help, the office is open so call 215-228-8200 for further information. ◆

### Be a Gazette Contributor!

We hope you have enjoyed the many member contributions in this issue. Please submit some yourself. Explored a battlefield? Seen an interesting museum exhibit? Read a new Civil War book or reread a favorite one? Share your experiences with round table members. Don't forget you can submit your photographs for the Where am I? feature. Also - don't forget the Meet Your Fellow Members series. Send a brief biography relating how you became interested in the Civil War and became a member of Camp Olden CWRT. Please include a photograph so other members will know who you are.

Jot down a couple of lines and send your photos and your thoughts to the Gazette email address: *oldennewsletter@optonline.net*. The mailing address is C&M Mazzocchi, 1430 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. Wall, NJ 07719.

For meeting and other information visit us on the Web: <u>www.campolden.org</u>. ◆

Answer to "Where Am I"? – Both sculptures were done by Seward Johnson. The first location is. of course, outside the Wills House on the Diamond in Gettysburg. The second location is in the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ. It is part of their current exhibit Seward Johnson: The Retrospective which will run until July 1, 2015. For further information see web page. http://www.groundsforsculpture.org/Exhibitions/Seward-Johnson-The-Retrospective ◆

Answer to "Who Am I?" - Major General Benjamin Butler - November 5, 1818–January 11, 1893 ◆