



The War Correspondent

Newsletter of the Ray Fawcett Chapter of the Central Ohio Civil War Roundtable

February 2012

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<http://centralohiocwrt.wordpress.com>

General-in-Chief's Report by Tim Maurice

Hello, Everyone,

It's hard to believe we are in the month of February already, especially with these warm temps we are currently having. With that said, there is no excuse for any of our members to stay home and miss a meeting. Last month's meeting was well attended, and the discussion was lively and interesting. Thanks to all those in attendance.

A reminder is in order for all officers and War Council members that we will have a short meeting prior to the general meeting. Please be at Ohio Health at 6:30 p.m.

I look forward to seeing everyone soon.

Answer to the January Puzzler

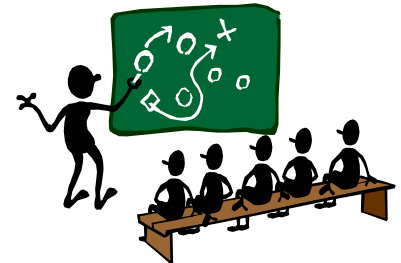
Puzzler: Which Civil War soldier held commissions in both the USA and CSA armies simultaneously?

Answer: Alfred Thomas Archmedes Torbert



War Council Meeting

Officers and members of the War Council, please plan to arrive early before the February roundtable meeting. We have a meeting at 6:30 p.m.



OHS Archives Tour

The Ohio Historical Society is offering an Archives/Library Stacks tour for Civil War buffs on Saturday, February 25. Curators will allow visitors to see and touch artifacts from the Civil War era in this unique behind-the-scenes guided tour of the museum's Civil War collection. Cost is \$99 per person. Reservations can be placed online at ohiocivilwar150.org. Proceeds benefit the collections preservation and education efforts of the OHS.

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

DATE:

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

TIME:

7:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Ohio Health Building
300 Polaris Parkway
Westerville, OH 43082

SPEAKER/TOPIC:

Harold George—Custer's Last Stand

Forgotten Zouaves

by
Mike Peters

The September 18, 1861, issue of the Poughkeepsie Eagle reported on the 53rd New York Infantry, “a regiment to be commanded by officers who have served in the French Army.” This was a tough task since many Frenchmen, recruited by Colonel Regis de Trobriand, had already joined the 55th New York Infantry, aka the Lafayette Guards. The pickings were mighty slim.

The men of the 53rd New York regiment were known as D’Epineuil’s Zouaves, named for their colonel, Lionel Jobert D’Epineuil, a former sailor in the French navy. Most of the soldiers came from Brooklyn



with a few hailing from upstate Poughkeepsie. Their uniforms were tailored by Brooks Brothers in the style of the traditional French Zouave. Their outfit included a red fez with a yellow tassel, dark blue jacket with yellow braiding, a blue

sash, and yellow and black leather leggings. Canvas gaiters completed the ensemble.

According to an online site dedicated to the 53rd New York Infantry, “On 3 January 1862 the regiment left by ship to North Carolina to assist Burnside’s Expedition to take Roanoke Island. By the time they left Annapolis, there were 300 deserters. Morale on the voyage plummeted due to poor accommodations.”

Prior to departing for North Carolina, morale was marginal at best. Colonel D’Epineuil was a strict disciplinarian. Officers and men were arrested for the slightest infractions. The Burnside Expedition was their only real action. The regiment disbanded on March 21, 1862. One of their ilk deserves mention here.

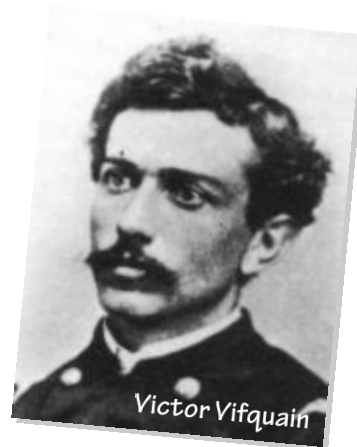
Victor Vifquain was born in Brussels in 1836. He emigrated to America in 1857 and joined the 53rd NY in 1861. Because of previous European military experience, Vifquain became a lieutenant and adjutant of the regiment. After the breakup of the 53rd, he joined the 97th Illinois and received a Medal of Honor for capturing a flag at Fort Blakely, Alabama, in 1865. For his actions, he was breveted a brigadier general. Vifquain and three other “Frenchmen” were part of an 1862 failed plot to kidnap CSA President Jeff Davis.

All things considered, Vifquain’s post-Civil War career was just as interesting.

He was a Nebraska politician. His political resume includes unsuccessful runs for Congress in 1867 and 1892. He was appointed U.S. Consul to Columbia in 1886 by

President Grover Cleveland and also served in various diplomatic posts in Panama.

He was a journalist, establishing the Daily State Democrat in Lincoln in 1879.



With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, he became adjutant and lieutenant colonel of the 3rd Nebraska Infantry, led by Colonel William Jennings Bryan. When the Scopes “Monkey Trial” lawyer resigned, Vifquain was promoted colonel. After the war, Vifquain and the 3rd Nebraska went to Cuba as part of an occupational force.

Victor Vifquain retired to his home in Lincoln, Nebraska. Before he could finish his memoirs, he died on January 7, 1904.

February Puzzler



Which Union regiment had the highest number of officers killed in the Civil War?

Custer's Last Stand

At our February meeting, author and lecturer Harold A. George will present a program on Custer's Last Stand. On June 25, 1876, 210 soldiers of the 7th Cavalry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer, died in battle against Lakota and Northern Cheyenne Indians. The army would call this The Battle of the Little Bighorn. The Indians called it The Battle of Greasy Grass. American history called it Custer's Last Stand.

George will present the program in first person and perform it in conjunction with his CD-ROM book, *Custer's Last Stand*. George will discuss the causes leading up to the battle; the life of a soldier in 1876; the weapons and tactics on both sides; what happened to the survivors of the battle; the battlefield today; and the archaeological study. George has studied the Battle of the Little Bighorn for more than thirty years and has lectured on the battle for more than twenty-five. He is also a member of Little Bighorn Associates, a nationally recognized organization.

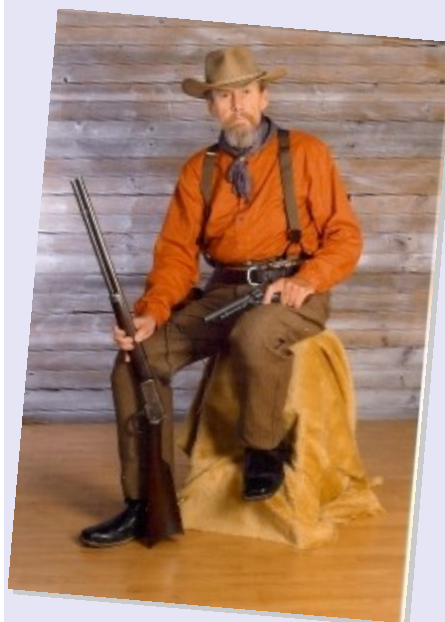
Harold George has been a Civil War reenactor with the 9th Ohio since 1992, rising to the rank of 1st Lieutenant to serve as the commanding officer. Included in the dozens of Civil War reenactments, parades and ceremonies that he has participated in, he was a part of the reenactment commemorating the 130th and 135th anniversaries of the Battle of Gettysburg.

In 2003 George published his first Civil War/genealogical book, *Men of the 9th Ohio*. The volunteers who served in the 9th Ohio came from

four northeastern Ohio counties. The book addresses the battery's Civil War record (1861–1865) and the genealogical hunt for Civil War gravesites. Three years later, George published his second Civil War book, *Civil War Monuments of Ohio*. The book is the first one ever published on the monuments located throughout Ohio and includes 270 monuments and their locations.

In 2007 his booklet, *DEAD Soldiers at Gettysburg*, was published. The booklet addresses Civil War battle casualties; how death was handled prior to and during the war; funeral practices in the 1800s; coffins and caskets; embalming; shipment of bodies home; and drawings and photographs showing where on the battlefield the soldiers were buried.

The following year George published *Ohio and the American Civil War*. This book covers four topics: photographs of every Civil War Monument in Ohio; the identification of sixty-five Civil War campsites in Ohio; Abraham Lincoln's visits to Ohio; and



Andrews' Raiders from Ohio. George has also produced a variety of DVDs and video programs. George appears in his Civil War-era military uniform when he gives talks to genealogical societies, libraries, schools, historical societies, senior organizations, church groups, and Boy Scout troops.

Harold George retired from the Department of Defense with twenty-nine years of service. When not writing or performing for the public, he enjoys photography, travel, fishing, and reading.



Raffle

With your support, we raised \$64 from the January book raffle. Thank you!

Adjutant General's Report *January 11, 2012* *by* *Sheryl Taylor*

We had quite a turnout for our January meeting, the one time of year when we truly meet as a roundtable and literally sit "in the round" by moving the chairs into a circle and discussing a topic as a group. This year we compared and contrasted the Civil War's importance relative to other American wars and ranked the most important of all the American wars. At the end of the meeting, each person ranked their top one to three wars. I've listed the results next to each war.

(continued on page 4)

Revolutionary War (1775–1783)

votes: 14

War of 1812 (1812–1815)

votes: 0

Mexican War (1846–1848)

votes: 1

Civil War (1861–1865)

votes: 9

Spanish-American War (1898)

votes: 1

World War I (1917–1918)

votes: 1

World War II (1941–1945) votes:

10

Korean War (1950–1953)

votes: 0

Vietnam War (1963–1975)

votes: 0

Persian Gulf War (1991)

votes: 0

War on Terror (Iraq and Afghanistan (2001–Present)

votes: 0

One question that kept arising was *What makes a particular war the MOST important war?* If it is the amount of American blood shed, then the Civil War should win outright. More Americans died in that war than in all others combined. If it is where the United States stood in the world before and then after the war, the winner might be the Spanish-American War or World War II. Some argued that in each case, these wars caused us to become a world power where before we were not.

If it is the culture or societal change the war brought to the United States, the Vietnam War might be considered most

important. The World War II era of coming together for one cause was over; questioning the status quo, including the principles the country was founded on, became de rigueur. If “most important” is judged by development of new technologies, World War II, with the development of nuclear weapons must again rise to the top. But then so also might a war not on the list, the Philippine-American War (1899–1902), which led to the development of the Colt .45 M1911 semi-automatic pistol.

What if the most important war is defined by what would have happened if we hadn’t had that war? Without the Mexican War, there would have been no Manifest Destiny and no training ground for the numerous soldiers who later fought during the Civil War. If the most important war is the last one you fought, then is the War on Terror the most important? Is that even a war?

By our voting, the Revolutionary War came out as the clear winner as the most important war America has ever fought. Many members claim its importance because it “began everything”—it created our country. Without it, no other wars would be fought. Yet other members think this war shouldn’t be on the list because the “United States of America” didn’t yet exist when the revolutionists fought the British. The outcome (that is, the creation of the United States as an independent nation) wasn’t determined until *after* the war was fought.

Give it some thought. How would you rank America’s wars?

2012 COCWRT CALENDAR

March 14, 2012

★ **Chris Kolakowski** — Tullahoma Campaign

April 12, 2012

★ **Frank O’Reilly**—Malvern Hill

May 9, 2012

★ **Martin Stewart**—71st Ohio Volunteer Infantry

June 13, 2012

★ **Eric Wittenberg**—Battle of White Sulphur Springs

July 11, 2012

★ **Clark “Bud” Hall**—Emergence of the Federal Cavalry as an Offensive Force of the Army of the Potomac

August 8, 2012

★ **Joe Reinhart**—9th Ohio Volunteer Infantry

September 12, 2012

★ **Tom Clemens**—Ezra Carman and the MD Campaign of 1862



Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at **7:00 p.m.** at the Ohio Health Building, 300 Polaris Parkway, Westerville, OH 43082.

Dates and speakers are subject to change.