Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

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First Days

April 24–26, 2020

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Winter 2020

On The FRONT LINE

CENTRAL VIRGINIA BATTLEFIELDS TRUST

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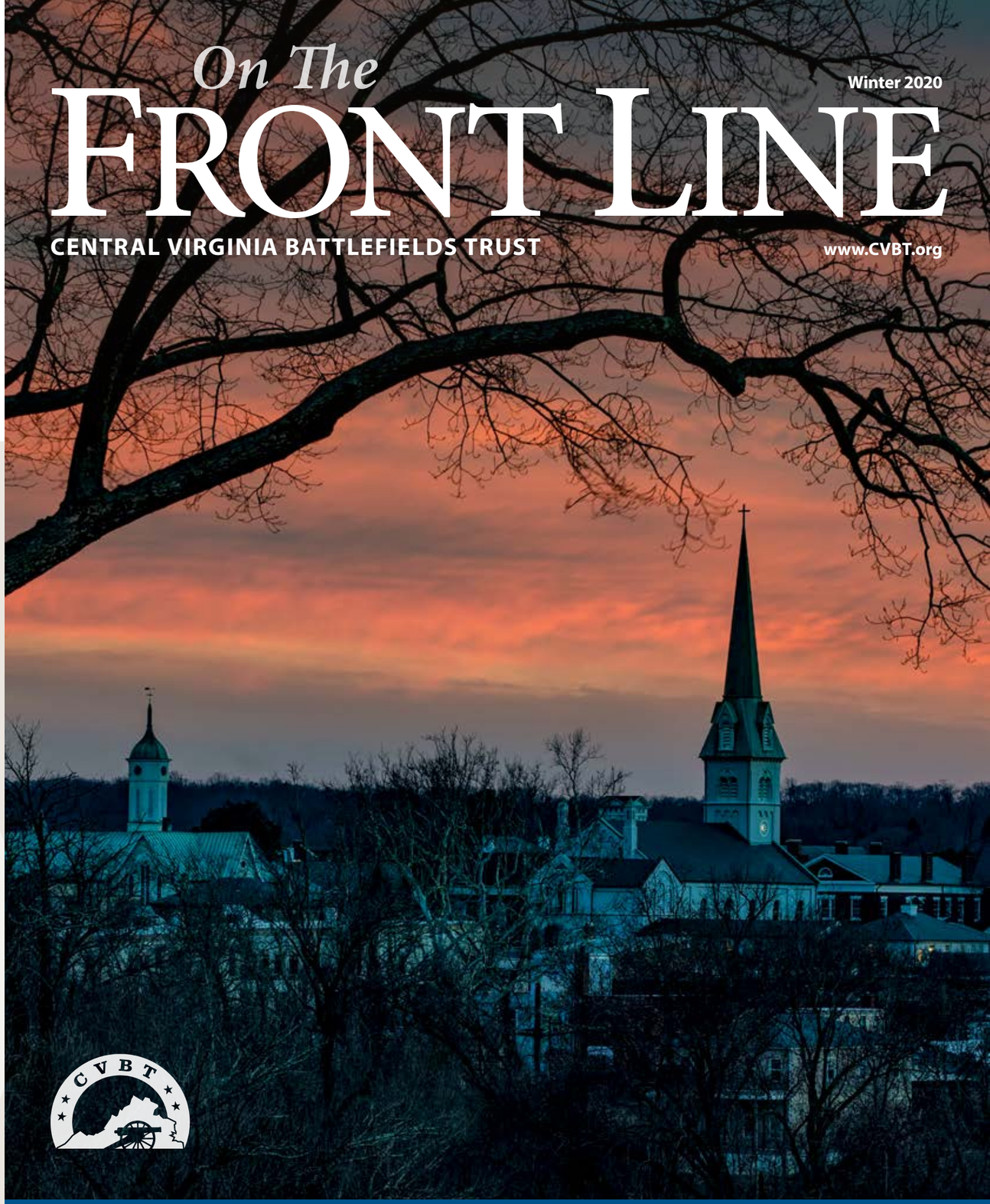

OUR WORK SAVING THE FREDERICKSBURG BATTLEFIELD

Barksdale's Mississippians took advantage of plenty of cover in town. As Federal artillery wrought its destruction, the damage it created often worked to the Confederates' advantage by creating more piles of rubble to hide behind and more holes in walls to use as firing portals. *Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park*

D.P. Newton

In the early 1920s, the interior of the Chandler office building was transformed into a museum for the fallen Jackson, complete with artifacts, displays and memorials. *Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park*

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

CVBT: On The Front Line is published semi-annually as a partnership communication for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. Contact CVBT at 540-374-0900 or www.cvbt.org.

The CVBT is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization preserving land associated with the four major Civil War campaigns of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House.

CVBT: On The Front Line

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Fredericksburg Skyline at Dawn
Buddy Secor

Dispatch from the President

As I sit to write this letter, I prepare to turn the calendar to a fresh year. This, of course, causes me to reflect on all that we at CVBT have done this past year.

In November, we were able to announce the completion of fundraising for the Spotsylvania Court House Fifth Corps property. Thanks to all of you, our Partners in preservation, and a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), we have saved this important portion of the battlefield forever! There is still the matter of removing a nonhistoric house, but that's already in the budget.

Plans for our 2020 CVBT Annual Conference are set, and we hope all of you come out for a great three days of unique tours, interesting speakers and, of course, a great dinner while mingling with your fellow Partners. Particulars are included in this issue and on the CVBT website, where you may register now.

With the addition of our new assistant to the executive director, Sarah Kay Bierle (see official announcement on page 2), we now have quite a "Dynamic Duo" in the office. Be on the lookout for exciting things coming from these two! You will have already noticed our monthly e-news keeping you informed of events between this magazine's publication. Sarah is working full-time and ready to help make an impact on our mission.

With your help, we continue to work toward the retirement of our debt for the Spotsylvania Myer's Hill property, and, with grants on the horizon, this will be realized soon. But there is no rest for the weary, and CVBT is working on multiple opportunities at several battlefields. As always, these negotiations never happen overnight — they always seem to have interesting twists and turns along the way. Navigating these obstacles is something we at CVBT are accustomed to handling.

As it is December, I would be remiss in my duties if I overlooked asking you to remember the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust in your year-end giving plans. In the past, I would send you a heartfelt letter, shining the candle on all we here at CVBT do with two employees, and an all-volunteer Board and president. Now that we have evolved into a publication such as this, I instead include that plea within these pages. Please remember your generous gift allows CVBT to function and to continue our mission.

We do not strive to be the biggest, but we do strive to do our best. Limited resources do not hinder our accomplishments in any way. In fact, we enjoy the work and always maintain the lowest overhead possible. That way, more can be invested in the "Dirt & Grass" CVBT was created to protect. We do more with less, and that's a talent in and of itself.

Between December 1862 and May 1864, four major battles — Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House — raged across our region. In a short, 18-month period, 750,000 troops faced off against one another in some of the most brutal warfare known to history. More than 100,000 casualties were realized; the town of Fredericksburg was bombarded and sacked; families were displaced; and the direction of the entire war was changed. One Confederate wrote at the opening of the Battle of the Wilderness that the countryside "seemed almost uninhabited and not even the bark of a dog or sound of a bird broke the dreary silence." It wasn't until the mid-1940s that this region's population returned to its pre–Civil War numbers. This is why the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust mission is to preserve land associated with these major campaigns.

Thank you for continuing to be a Partner in preservation and keeping our history alive.

Tom Van Winkle

Tom Van Winkle
President, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Register Now for "First Days," the 2020 CVBT Annual Conference

From April 24-26, 2020, CVBT members will gather in Fredericksburg, Va. for the organization's Annual Conference. This year's event will debut a new, half-day tour format that means less walking and more focused attention to specific topics.

"We've done the entire battlefield many times and spent the day looking at the big picture," says CVBT President Tom Van Winkle, "Now we take a look at the ever-important "First Day" of each conflict."

That means a Friday morning tour with Kris White focusing solely on the Union crossing of the Rappahannock River on December 11, 1862, and the street fighting that followed, rather than splitting time and attention with the December 13 assault on Marye's Heights. Other tours include Friday afternoon at the First Day at Chancellorsville site with Frank O'Reilly, Saturday morning looking at the May 5, 1864 fighting at the Wilderness with Greg Mertz and Saturday afternoon at Todd's Tavern and other sites associated with the opening phases of Spotsylvania Court House with Chris Mackowski.

The event also has many opportunities for socializing and networking with other passionate preservationists and history lovers. A Friday evening President's Reception includes complimentary wine, beer and appetizers, while the Saturday banquet features a keynote address from historian Chris Kolakowski, examining "Blue & Gray on the Blue & Brown Water: Naval Perspectives on the Civil War." The weekend will wrap up with an interactive discussion over breakfast at Historic Stevenson Ridge.

Registration options include a discounted package to attend all events, as well as the ability to make a la carte selections. Please note that lunches will not be provided on tours, but a 90-minute window at the hotel between morning and afternoon sessions will offer sufficient time to eat on your own. Special discounts will be available at several restaurants near our headquarters. Snacks and water will be provided on buses during both tour sessions.

This year's event will be headquartered at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel and Conference Center (2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22401). A discounted group rate of $95, which includes a breakfast buffet, is available; please make your reservations for accommodations.

Registration may be completed online, or by using the detachable form included on the envelope in this magazine.

Meet CVBT's New Staff Member

Sarah Kay Bierle

Sarah Kay Bierle joined CVBT as assistant to the executive director in October. The California native has spent years studying the Civil War and brings to us a background in writing, social media and community event organization.

Sarah graduated from Thomas Edison State University with a degree in history. She is a popular speaker at history conferences, Civil War round tables and historical societies. Sarah has hosted a yearly history conference series for Gazette665 in California and works part-time as the managing editor at Emerging Civil War. Her four published books include a nonfiction study on the Battle of New Market and an award-winning historical fiction novel. She continues to look for ways to educate about the past, loves community outreach projects and searches for innovative ways to help people find the "history in their backyards." Excited to be living Virginia, Sarah is also pursuing her research on artillery officers and the Union II Corps and enjoys walking the battlegrounds.

"A Cannon Boomed": Pelham's Guns at Fredericksburg

BY SARAH KAY BIERLE

On December 13, 1862, a young Confederate artillery officer positioned a single gun — a 12-pound Napoleon from Capt. Mathis Henry's horse artillery battery — behind a cedar hedge, letting the foliage, lingering fog and naturally lower ground obscure his position. Readied, he opened fire on the Union left flank, catching Maj. Gen. George G. Meade's division by surprise and diverting its attention from its intended advance against Lt. Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's line.

Moments before, Confederate Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart had sent a message to his commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee, saying, "I am going to crowd them with artillery." Southern batteries held Lee's right flank, anchored on Prospect Hill and extending with about 18 guns to guard the far flank. Maj. John Pelham — the 24-year-old who had organized the Stuart Horse Artillery and turned it into a powerful fighting unit — saw an opportunity to cause chaos and destruction on the battlefield. Receiving Stuart's permission, Pelham advanced, taking position in a basin-like depression.

When Henry and Pelham opened their assault, they sent enfilade fire into the Union troops preparing to cross Slaughter Pen Farm. According to one Union soldier, "A cannon boomed out on our left, at close range, seemingly on the Bowling Green road, a shot whizzed high in the air passing over our heads from left to right along our line. Naturally supposing, from the position, 'twas one of our own batteries. We thought our gunners had had too much 'commissary' this morning and so remarked."

The Federals did not realize they were caught in the fire of an artillery genius who had plagued them on numerous other battlefields. Pelham — an Alabamian and former West Point cadet — brought energy, organization and level-headed courage to most of his combat ventures. A favorite subordinate of Stuart, Pelham had proved successful on battlefields around Richmond, Manassas and Sharpsburg, as well as during many cavalry operations. At Fredericksburg, Pelham used a combination of his favorite tactics: engage suddenly, hit the flank, shift the gun's position slightly to throw off the enemy's aim and do not retire until the ammunition chest is empty.

This performance was the culmination of a year of successes developing tactics, and it fittingly drew the attention of Confederate high command. Jackson supposedly remarked, "With a Pelham on each flank, I could whip the world." Lee complimented the young officer's bravery, saying, "It is glorious to see such courage in one so young."

Pelham's Corner *Terry Rensel*

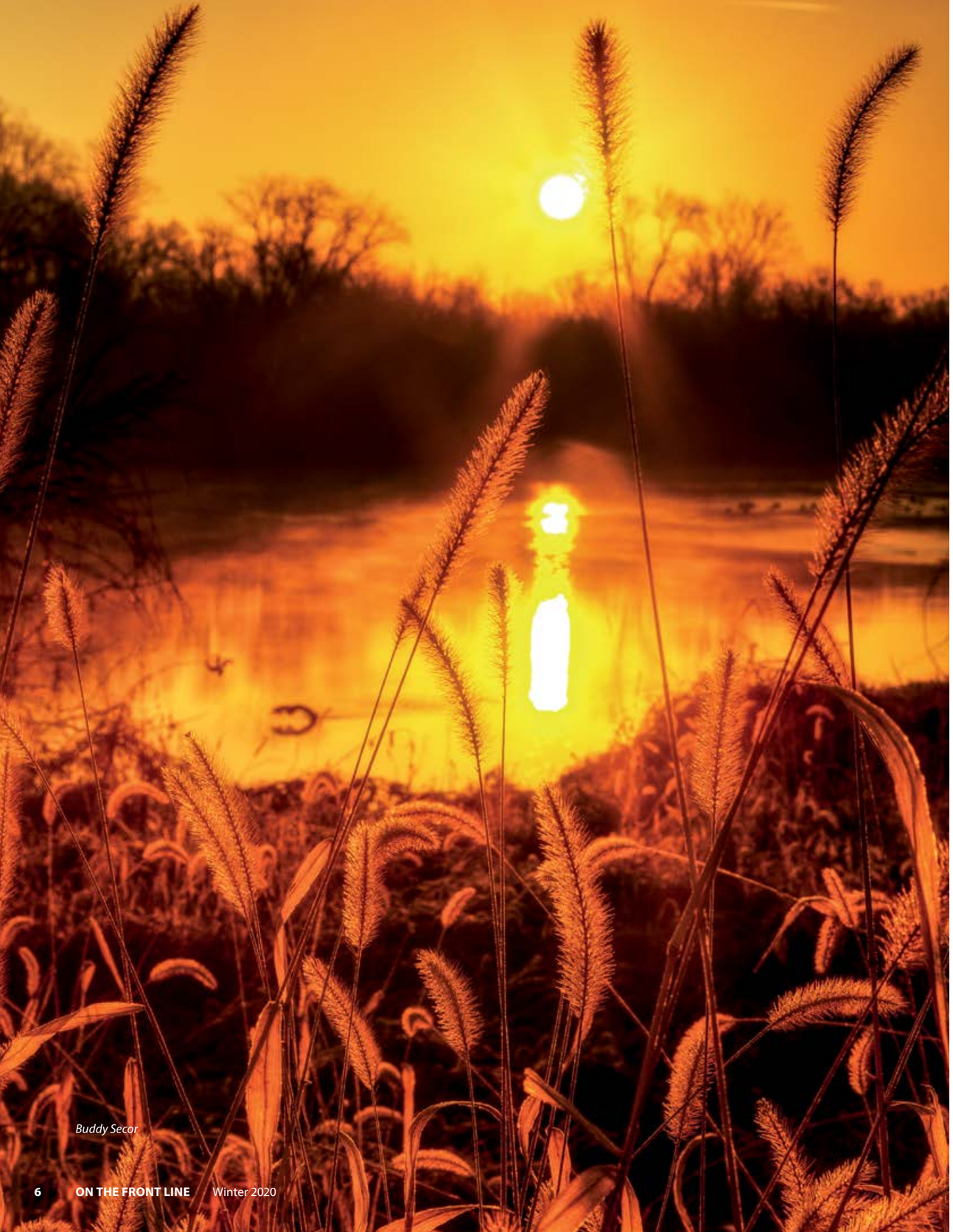
Although the site of Pelham's guns is protected by CVBT, commercial development surrounds the 4.5-acre park.

However, on this day, the fight turned. Six Union batteries, plus parrot rides on Stafford Heights, attempted to silence the noisy Napoleon. Stuart, fearing for the lives of the artillerymen, grew increasingly blunt in his multiple messages to the gunners: "Get back from destruction, you infernal, gallant fool, John Pelham!" He also attempted to send a second cannon into the fight, but Capt. John E. Cooke's Blakeney took a bad position and was destroyed within minutes.

Meanwhile, Pelham stubbornly refused to fall back and even joined the gun crew himself. He ordered the men to lie down to escape the worst of the bombardment, then slightly repositioned the gun to keep the enemy from finding an exact range. Still, three men died and eight others were wounded, as well as 14 horses lost. After about an hour, maneuvering Union infantry finally forced Pelham out of his advanced position. Retiring, he focused on the next task: using the artillery line to defend Jackson's flank and accepting the additional guns transferred to his immediate command for that day.

Major Pelham, Captain Henry and their artillerymen halted the entire Union First Corps — approximately 12,000 men — and caused Meade and his wing commander, Maj. Gen. William B. Franklin, to re-evaluate the Confederate strength. The position Pelham had selected, along with his gunnery skill, contributed to this stunning success in the opening hours of the day's battle. His success at Fredericksburg ultimately proved the capstone of his prowess, forging the memory that would be cemented after his death three months later at Kelly's Ford.

Today, Pelham probably would not recognize the ground he chose for his gun that December day. However, he would recognize a cannon placed on the corner of Tidewater Trail and Benchmark Road and, perhaps, feel surprised that the place bears his name. Beginning in 1999, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust started preservation efforts in the area of Pelham's advanced position. Thanks to the cooperation of and generous donations from Silver Companies and CVBT Partners, Pelham's Corner preserves 4.5 acres as a gateway to further interpretation of artillery and the far flank of the Fredericksburg lines.



Buddy Secor

HALL'S BRIGADE

at the Upper Crossing

BY KRISTOPHER D. WHITE

"The storming and sacking of the town reached far beyond anything of the kind I ever read of," recalled Herbert Mason of the 20th Massachusetts Infantry. "The dash across the river in boats, the thundering of the artillery, the houses in flames, the rattling of musketry in the streets. The heaps of the dead. The groans of the dying & wounded, the crash of falling buildings & everything combined to make it horrible …"

The men of the 20th Massachusetts Infantry pulled their oars as hard as they could to power the flat-nosed pontoon boats across the frigid waters of the Rappahannock River, straight into a man-made storm of shot and shell. The soldiers comprising Company I hailed from Nantucket, and many had been professional sailors prior to the war. Second Lt. Leander Alley stood on the gunwale of the boat as his men channeled the spirit of Col. John Glover and his Marbleheaders, who had carried George Washington's army across the Delaware River 85 years earlier. Alley had saltwater for blood, according to one officer. Noticing a rower out of sync, Alley quickly ordered the man away from the oar, and Pvt. Josiah Murphey assumed the task. The wooden hull cracked, and oars splintered as bullets rained into the craft.

Atop the riverbank and along Sophia and Hawke Streets ahead, gunfire crackled as two other regiments of Col. Norman J. Hall's brigade from the Federal Second Corps — the 7th Michigan and 19th Massachusetts — clashed with gray- and butternut-clad Mississippians in the streets, backyards and houses of Fredericksburg. Acting Maj. George Macy of the 20th had been promised earlier in the day that his proud "Harvard Regiment" would have the honor of leading the brigade across the pontoon bridges and into Fredericksburg. Most, if not all of the men, could not have imagined that they would enter the city via a riverine assault, rather than marching over the river on pontoon bridges.

For nearly three weeks, the Army of the Potomac had lain stranded on the northern and eastern banks of the Rappahannock. The 123,000-man juggernaut stood poised to spring across the river, seize the sleepy city of roughly 5,000 inhabitants and press south toward the Confederate capital of Richmond. Unfortunately for the Federals, the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg was devoid of bridges. But the Federal high command had planned for this contingency. The Union's new principal commander in the Eastern Theater was 38-year-old Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside. Burnside had moved through the Fredericksburg area in August 1862, and the Federals occupied the city throughout much of the spring and summer months of the same year. Thus, when the Fredericksburg Campaign got underway in mid-November, the Yankees were aware of the lack of bridges. Burnside called for temporary pontoon bridges to be sent on to Fredericksburg, with the intent that they arrive about the same time as the infantry.

However, while Burnside's army arrived on November 17, the last of his bridging materials did not arrive until November 25. By that time, a portion of Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederate

Michigan and Massachusetts have similar-looking blue flags when furled, so by flags alone, it would be tough to identify these men as Bay Staters. However, the 17th Michigan made first landfall on the Confederate side of the river. With soldiers already on the far shore in this picture, that suggests the men "boating up" in this picture were either from the 19th or 20th Massachusetts.
Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park

Army of Northern Virginia had moved into the Fredericksburg area, blocking Burnside's direct line of march to Richmond.

After a few weeks of snow, rain, river scouting and indecision, Burnside settled on a plan: cross the Rappahannock at three locations at and below Fredericksburg. The general concluded that "the enemy would be more surprised by a crossing at or near Fredericksburg" than anywhere else. In the end, though, the biggest surprise about the crossing at Fredericksburg would be the tenacity of the Confederate resistance.

Burnside slated December 11 for the day of his grand enterprise. Engineers scouted the riverbank for approach routes and possible bridging sites. Cannon rolled into battery along Stafford Heights to cover the crossing. Dozens of guns sighted the city, using the steeples of the churches and City Hall as reference points. Infantry positioned themselves along the riverbank to provide covering fire to the weaponless engineers and to prepare for the infantry's march into the city.

Just before midnight, Federal engineers "fell in line of march" and moved toward the river. Two hours later, two bridges began to stretch westward from the Stafford shore of the Rappahannock toward the northern edge of the city. One mile downriver, a third bridge was taking shape below the heights that once boasted the boyhood home of George Washington. Just over a mile-and-a-quarter farther downriver, engineers gave life to two more spans.

The moon set at 1:00 a.m., and a cover of fog shrouded the valley. Temperatures dipped as low as 24 degrees. A skin of ice formed along the riverbanks. The engineers worked at a feverish pace to complete their work. By 5:00 a.m., the Federals' bridges were well across the river and stood ready to be completed by dawn.

It was not to be.

Confederate forces posted in Fredericksburg itself could hear the cracking of ice on the river, as well as the sounds of construction. The commander of the city's defense was a 41-year-old Tennessee transplant now in charge of four Mississippi regiments. Brig. Gen. William Barksdale was anything but a West Point–trained officer. One Confederate soldier claimed that he "had a thirst for glory," but this lawyer-politician turned soldier had amassed a solid fighting record in Lee's army. Well aware that the Federals were plotting a movement across the river, Barksdale, "the fiery and impetuous Mississippian," prepared for battle. December 11, 1862, would be his finest day in Lee's army.

After establishing his headquarters in the circa-1816 Market House, which was centrally located in downtown Fredericksburg along Princess Anne Street, Barksdale and his subordinates set to work creating a defense in depth of the city.

Their first resistance point was set up along the river at Sophia Street. A second line of resistance was set up along

Monument to the 17th Michigan at the Upper Crossing. *Buddy Secor*

Caroline Street, and a third on Princess Anne Street. However, Barksdale did not deploy his men in traditional lines of battle, as a cityscape did not allow for this type of deployment. Rather, the Mississippians took to the houses, shops and warehouses of Fredericksburg for cover, acting almost as modern sniper teams. Others dug rifle pits, and still others cut firing portals in fences and walls, creating ambush points.

With orders to "let the bridge building go on until the enemy were committed to it and the construction parties were within easy range," Barksdale and his men waited. At 5:00 a.m., two cannon fired along the main Confederate line, roughly three-quarters of a mile to the west. These guns were not aimed toward the Federal engineers, whom they could not see; rather, they were signal guns to tell Lee's army that Burnside was crossing and that the army should consolidate at Fredericksburg.

Ten minutes later, the sharp report of hundreds of muskets let loose into the morning air. "[I]n an instant we were in the midst of a perfect storm of bullets ... they went whizzing and spitting by and around me, pattering on the bridge, splashing into the water and thugging through the boats," said Capt. Wesley Brainerd of the 50th New York Engineers.

The Battle of Fredericksburg had commenced.

Engineers scurried off their bridges, taking whatever cover that they could find. Suddenly, the 147 Federal cannon lining Stafford Heights roared to life. "Tons of iron were hurled against this place," one Mississippian recalled. "[T]he deafening roar of cannon and bursting shells, falling walls and chimneys, bricks and timbers flying through the air, houses set on fire, the smoke adding to the already heavy fog. … It was appalling … [and] would paralyze the stoutest heart, and one from which not a man in Barksdale's Brigade had the slightest hope of escaping."

Under the heavy cannonade, and with no engineers on the bridges, the Mississippians took cover, too, and rode out the man-made storm. After a while, the cannoneers ceased firing. All fell quiet. Too quiet. Back to work went the engineers. From the smoking city cellars and protective works crept the Mississippians.

The cat-and-mouse game started anew.

Engineers dove for cover as Barksdale tried to give Lee "a bridge of dead Yankees." Again, the cannon roared to life. This deadly game went on for hours.

Somewhere around 2:00 p.m., Federal Brig. Gen. Henry Hunt had an epiphany. The Federals had boats, and they had a plethora of infantry. Why not combine the two and cross the river? At first, Burnside loved the idea — but quickly had second thoughts. He would allow this venture only if the men crossing the river volunteered to do so. Colonel Hall was close at hand, and he "voluntold" his men that they were to cross the river in boats.

The 7th Michigan crossed the river first with some 130 men. Some of the boats floated downstream, while others spun in circles as one side paddled faster than the other. Halfway across the river, Lt. Col. Henry Baxter was shot in the chest and severely wounded. Baxter urged his men to turn back, but his second in command, Maj. Thomas Hunt, would have none of it. Hunt ordered the men forward and to take no prisoners. The Wolverines were "fighting with death itself."

Men in blue were shot down left and right in the seven boats crossing the river. "An oarsman would be seen relinquishing his oar and falling down dead or wounded in the bottom of his boat or overboard in the river.... It may have been the saddest sight during my life in the army," remembered one Federal onlooker. "The scene forced tears from many of my comrades and me who were eyewitnesses to it."

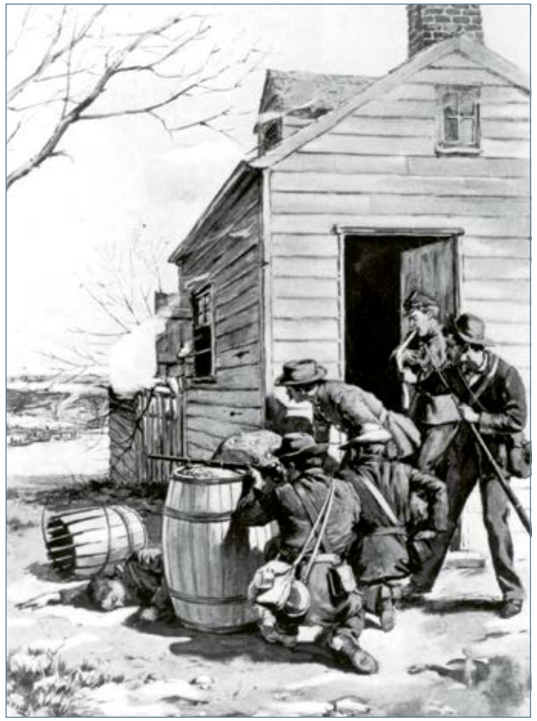
Undaunted, the Michiganders reached the far shore. The flat noses of the pontoons served as excellent landing craft, akin to a Higgins Boat of World War II. "The Michigan men sprang up the bank with a yell, [and] drove them out of the nearest buildings," an observer said.

Urban combat was not a new concept in American military history, although it was uncommon, and infantry lacked urban combat training. It had occurred during the Revolution at Quebec and Trenton (twice), in the 1850s in Mexico City and previously during the Civil War at Carthage, Missouri, and Cynthiana, Kentucky. Now Fredericksburg could be added to that unenviable list of engagements.

The fighting in the first buildings the Yankees entered was fierce. The pent-up rage of the last six months — the failure of the Peninsula Campaign, the loss at Second Manassas, the hell the brigade endured in the West Woods of Antietam, the removal of George McClellan from command of the army, the wounding of their commander as they crossed the Rappahannock — was unleashed on Barksdale's men.

Meanwhile, the boats turned back for more human cargo. Across the river in several waves now came the 19th Massachusetts. The newly arrived Bay State regiment pushed inland to the right of the 7th Michigan. A squad of the 19th, consisting of men from Companies A and I, reached the Wellford House and, in trying to cross Caroline Street, came under heavy small-arms fire. Capt. Henry Weymouth ordered the men "to go through the gate, when as much as a barrel of bullets came at him." The men decided to go through the house instead. The squad passed through the house and reached the front door along Caroline Street. "Gilman Nichols of Company A

Members of the Virginia National Guard assisted reenactors in staging a pontoon crossing of the river for the battle's 150th anniversary.
Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs



Barksdale's Mississippians took advantage of plenty of cover in town. As Federal artillery wrought its destruction, the damage it created often worked to the Confederates' advantage by creating more piles of rubble to hide behind and more holes in walls to use as firing portals.
Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park

... found the door locked and burst it open with the butt of his musket," and immediately fell dead, courtesy of a Confederate who lay in wait. Others fell wounded. Rather than risk crossing into the open, what remained of the squad took refuge in the house and waited for reinforcements and darkness.

Once the 7th Michigan and 19th Massachusetts landed on the enemy shoreline, the Confederate infantry no longer cared about the Federal engineers — they now had trouble of their own. That meant the engineers, now unmolested, could complete their bridges.

More Federal reinforcements came in the form of acting Maj. George Macy's 20th Massachusetts. Although the engineers completed the bridges by the time the Harvard Regiment was ready to cross, the men jumped into boats and made a crossing in "the bateaux."

"We jumped out and waded to the land," recalled Private Murphey of their arrival on the far side. The Harvard Regiment found a largely static front. While Federals had forced back the Confederates' forward-resistance line at Sophia Street, the Rebels had only fallen back to the second resistance line at Caroline Street. Major Hunt and his 7th Michigan pressed west along Hawke Street for one-half block and ensconced themselves behind a sturdy wall. To the north, the 19th Massachusetts found itself stalled, as "nearly every house and cellar had someone in it, firing from the windows."

The city of Fredericksburg fronted one-and-a-quarter mile of the Rappahannock River, but only 1,110 feet of the city waterfront was in the hands of Hall's brigade. Federals had to take action before Barksdale's men counterattacked against the Federal lifeline, the bridges. In fact, the 13th Mississippi attempted just such a move, and nearly succeeded.

Just then, Acting Major Macy brought his Harvard scholars charging up over the river embankment and down Hawke Street "in column by company." There, he halted his men near the 7th Michigan and debated the situation. Which regiment should press the attack forward? Crucial minutes passed as neither Macy nor Hunt would budge. Behind them, more Federals poured across the bridge into the tiny bridgehead. The 42nd and 59th New York swung to the left and south of the Wolverines. The new 127th Pennsylvania came across next.

Fire from the Mississippians in front of them was intense. Federal artillery roared back to life in support of their pinned-down, bottlenecked infantry.

As Macy and Hunt debated the next move, orders came from their division commander, Brig. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard. Both hoped the new orders would clarify the situation; sadly, they did not. While Howard was one of the bravest men in the army, he was also one of the worst combat leaders. With no specification, Howard ordered: "[C]lear the street leading from the bridge at all hazards." With Hunt outranking Macy, the former stayed behind his wall, and Macy ordered the 20th forward into the Hawke Street–Caroline Street intersection 50 yards ahead, where "[n]o man could live beyond that corner."

The 20th Massachusetts rushed headlong into the intersection. Their lead platoon did not stop at the exposed position, but rather, drove deeper into the city. Subsequent platoons sealed off the intersection, with platoons wheeling to the right and left, and another cutting off the approach down Hawke Street from Princess Anne Street.

The 13th and 17th Mississippi gave them stout resistance. Many of the Confederates held the "high ground" — second-floor windows from which they could fire down on the Federals. Bay Staters "broke in doors and chased the Rebs out the back yard returning shot for shot," recalled one soldier. Macy ordered his men to use the bayonet as they cleared the houses. Confederates inside the buildings later stated that the Yankee bullets were not the problem as they defended the town — it was the thin clapboard homes, which would splinter when hit with shot and shell, turning wood splinters and glass into a form of shrapnel that shredded the defenders.

With darkness creeping across the Rappahannock Valley, and parts of Fredericksburg in flames, Lee ordered Barksdale and his men out of the city. The Rebels had completed their mission: contest the river crossing and buy time for Lee's army to concentrate at Fredericksburg.

Pockets of resistance remained in the city, and firefights broke out in the night, but Burnside's bridges were in place. It had cost his army one full day and, in Hall's brigade, some 330 officers and men. The 20th Massachusetts alone lost 97 men in their 50-yard charge to, and defense of, the Hawke Street–Caroline Street intersection.

Private Murphey, who was wounded at the corner of Caroline Street, perhaps best described the feeling of the Yankees who forced the crossing at the upper bridge site: "I got up rather faint, and [a] feeling of madness came over me," he said. "I swore; I cursed the whole southern Confederacy from Virginia to the Gulf of Mexico."

That madness overcame more than just Murphey — it overcame much of the Federal army. And in the coming hours, the city of Fredericksburg would pay the price for the rest of the Southern Confederacy.

A panoramic view of the Upper Crossing area.
Rob Shenk

ARTIFACTS *of* War

BY TOM VAN WINKLE

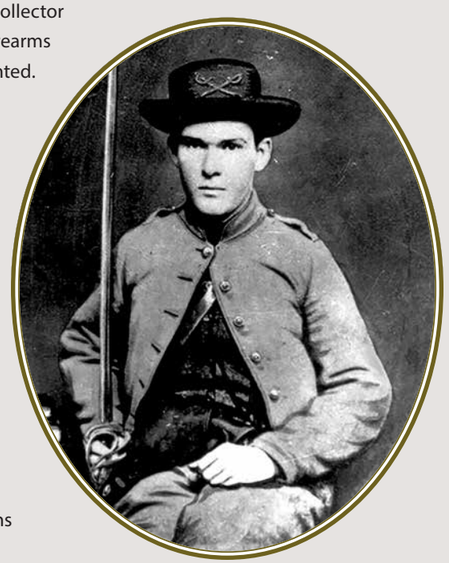
Many students and enthusiasts of the Civil War collect relics. These artifacts may be found at trade shows, online auctions and private collections — and, yes, still buried on the field, waiting to be discovered. Weapons of war are always interesting and extremely desirable. The modernization in design and function of these weapons changed the style of battle as the Civil War wore on. Progressions, like that from cap and ball (also known as percussion lock, or caplock) to cartridge, or smooth bore to rifled barrel are particularly fascinating.

As an example, let us examine one particular weapon, a Model 1863 Sharps carbine. First, the formal specifications: length of 39"; weight 7¾ pounds; designed to fire a .52-caliber projectile. The Sharps carbine was renowned for its ruggedness and dependability. This long-gun firearm's name comes from the French word *carabine*. Its principal advantage was that its length, the barrel being shorter than that of a rifle or musket, made it very portable, making it a favorite among the cavalry. The firearm was loaded by activating a lever, actually the trigger guard, inserting a paper or linen cartridge in the breech and closing the lever. The ignition was the same as the musket, via the standard cap.

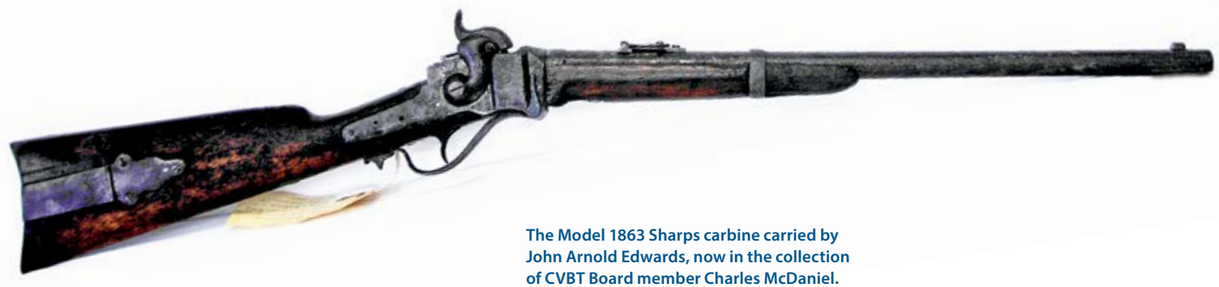
Now all this is interesting enough in the abstract. But this particular weapon is special because we can also identify the actual Civil War soldier who carried and used it.

CVBT Board member and avid Civil War weapons collector Charles McDaniel has been accumulating interesting firearms related to the Civil War for more years than can be counted. Charlie, though, has a different take than that of many other collectors: If a firearm doesn't have a traceable story behind it, he is far less interested in acquiring the piece. And this carbine certainly fit his criteria when he discovered it earlier this year at a Fredericksburg military antiques store.

This Sharps carbine was used by Corp. John Arnold Edwards, the grandson of Capt. Sommerville, a Revolutionary War veteran. He was born February 29, 1836, in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, the second of nine children. Edwards married his second cousin, Rosa Emma Edwards, and the pair settled at Walnut Hill in King George County, Virginia, which he received from his father. Together, they had three children: Margaret Maria; Nancy Elizabeth, who died at 29 months in 1863; and George Arnold. In the 1860 census, the 24-year-old Edwards was listed as a teacher.



Corp. John Arnold Edwards



The Model 1863 Sharps carbine carried by John Arnold Edwards, now in the collection of CVBT Board member Charles McDaniel.
Tom Van Winkle

On August 25, 1862, Edwards enlisted as a corporal in the 15th Virginia Cavalry at Fredericksburg, Virginia. The regiment had been formed from the consolidation of the 14th and 15th Battalions of the Virginia Cavalry, along with two other independent companies. Units of the 15th saw action at Malvern Hill, South Mountain, Brandy Station, Mine Run, the Wilderness, Cold Harbor and several others battles.

Records indicate that Edwards entered St. Charles Hospital, in Richmond, on December 13, 1862, suffering from a fever. He was released sometime in mid-January 1863. There is no muster roll for Edwards' company between November and December 1862.

Edwards ultimately died of wounds received in a cavalry skirmish at Brandy Station on October 11, 1863. Research by Civil War historian, Robert K. Krick, notes that the description of wounds suffered was "dislocation of humerus" by a shell or shell fragment. Krick also records that Edwards was admitted to Chimborazo Hospital, Division #2, on October 14.

The local paper, the *Richmond Dispatch*, printed a short death notice on January 18, reporting that Edwards died in the Linwood House, described as a low-end hotel at the corner of 9th and Main — a structure, Krick notes, burned to the ground in the evacuation of 1865.

John Arnold Edwards' grave site at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond

Edwards was interred at the Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond on January 19, and his grave site is identified with a marker provided by the Veterans Administration. In July 1864, Rosa Edwards, received $273.36 that the government owed her husband, after hiring a lawyer to obtain this sum. Rosa was also approved for a Virginia widow's pension in the amount of $30.00 per month.

The biography of John Arnold Edwards is far more comprehensive than space allows to be printed in these pages. I had the honor of holding this weapon at the CVBT office. Knowing the story of the fallen soldier who relied on this weapon to protect his life — and to hold it in the town in which he enlisted — was an emotive experience. This also goes straight to the heart of why we at CVBT preserve our battlefields and history: in memory of those who fought there, men like Corp. John Arnold Edwards.

In Memoriam: D.P. Newton (1953-2019)

The Civil War history and preservation community lost a legendary chronicler of events on October 8, 2019. In addition to his many accomplishments and awards, D.P. Newton was founder and curator of the White Oak Civil War Museum in Stafford County. He is survived by his wife, Bonny, and extended family.

Newton's museum, which tells the story of the Army of the Potomac's campsites in Stafford County during the winter of 1862–63. His decades of tireless research and field work provide an incredibly detailed portrait of what that Union army endured at its lowest point of the war.

Robert Lee Hodge (left) presents CVBT's Dr. Mike Stevens Award for Preservation to D.P. Newton (right).

The museum was established in 1998, in a former schoolhouse — the same one that both Newton and his mother attended. Its six rooms feature thousands of artifacts on display. Outside, a reconstructed set of winter huts offers visitors a glimpse of camp life. The White Oak Museum is one of the only places one can study Civil War winter quarters.

According to Bonny, it must be remembered that the collection's significance shouldn't be measured monetarily: "The value is that D.P. was the first person to touch items that some 17- or 20-year-old Yankee soldier last touched. He knows many of those soldiers were far away from home, and some took their last breath right here in Stafford, Spotsylvania or Fredericksburg. He treasures every bullet or button that those soldiers carried around on their person. He believes he's simply the caretaker of those soldier boys' relics that they left behind."

Bonny called her husband an "unassuming country fellow" with "a gift for organizing and building the right case for the set of objects it contains, all of which tells a piece of a very important story in our country's history."

Newton was also instrumental in the establishment of the Stafford Civil War Park, which preserves part of the winter encampment site of the Union 11th Corps during the winter of 1862–63. Historians in the region also tapped into his expertise for assistance on a myriad of subjects.

In 2018, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust honored Newton with its annual Dr. Mike Stevens Preservation Award. During the presentation, CVBT Board member Robert Lee Hodge called D.P. "a fisherman and a carpenter," referring to D.P.'s literal carpentry skills and the strong Christian ethos that drove him to help people. He once made a meticulous reproduction cannon and carriage that added to his low-key ability and character to wow people with the variety and quality of his museum's collection. "It's homespun. It's not corporate," Hodge said of the museum and why he likes it so much.

CVBT President Tom Van Winkle commented. "I met D.P. some 15 years ago, and a humbler Virginia gentleman you could not find. Every time we met, he would always offer his museum or his talents to our organization. We have lost an icon."

Newton's museum has also been featured in *The New York Times* and has received numerous other awards. These include the History Award Medal by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and the Emerging Civil War's Public History Service Award.

D.P. Newton will be missed, but fondly remembered. His legacy, The White Oak Civil War Museum is located at 985 White Oak Road, Falmouth, Virginia.

Meet Mark and Karen Perreault

We at CVBT are blessed with many outstanding Partners in preservation, leaving us with an embarrassment of riches for who to feature in this segment of *On the Front Line*! In this issue, we are pleased to focus on a couple whose work in support of Civil War battlefield preservation is extraordinary. They epitomize all that the term "partner" represents to us and the broader world of historic preservation. We speak, of course, of Mark and Karen Perreault.

These Virginians complement each other perfectly. Mark enjoys battle studies, while Karen prefers historical biography. Mark does not have any ancestors who fought in the war; Karen counts forebears on both sides who served in the conflict. The Kingsburys, her paternal side, fought for the Union; the Butt and Carty families, of her maternal line, fought for the South. Karen's great-great grandfather, Anthony Southgate Butt, was a teamster in the 39th Va. Calvary Battalion, who were assigned as couriers and escorts for the Confederate high command. Butt accompanied Gen. Robert E. Lee from Appomattox to Richmond following the surrender on April 9, 1865.

Both Mark and Karen frequent our battlefields and appreciate the opportunity to walk the ground so many brave individuals traversed before them. When asked why they felt preserving Civil War battlefields was so important, their unified answer was comprehensive: "Preserving our history so Americans will not forget and the young can learn, protecting critical open space as outdoor classrooms. [Saving] valuable wildlife habitat and parks in areas that otherwise would be paved over, and honoring the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for their nation, states, communities and families."

They also feel strongly about education, especially for our youth, with Karen counting it important "so they will understand the defining conflict of our nation and have a historical context to bring to current issues."

Mark and Karen have been CVBT Partners since 1996, with Mark attributing their affiliation to the fact that "CVBT is dedicated to, and repeatedly successful in, preserving battlefield land in the most challenging environment for land preservation in America."

CVBT has been a beneficiary of Mark and Karen's generosity for many years, and the support they offer has made a measurable difference. CVBT President Tom Van Winkle stated, "I have been honored to get to know Mark and Karen, they are remarkable people." Van Winkle added, "When CVBT first purchased the Myer's Hill Spotsylvania property, Mark was one of the first to trudge along in the forest of tangled underbrush while I swung my machete, clearing a meager path for us."

> **"Preserving our history so Americans will not forget and the young can learn, protecting critical open space as outdoor classrooms. [Saving] valuable wildlife habitat and parks in areas that otherwise would be paved over, and honoring the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for their nation, states, communities and families."**
>
> MARK AND KAREN PERREAULT

The Perreaults are also active with several other preservation organizations, and there have been several efforts that simply would not have been accomplished without their involvement. But they seek no acclaim, and it was no small chore to receive their blessing for this article. It is individuals such as these humble patrons of history who are rewarded by what has been preserved and who may have benefitted from the education afforded by these acts.

In closing, Mark and Karen stated the following, "We encourage our fellow Partners to assist the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, to the maximum extent possible, as time is short for protecting battlefields in CVBT's area of interest."

The Stonewall Jackson Death Site

BY CHRIS MACKOWSKI
Adapted from a piece that originally ran on www.emergingcivilwar.com

"The Stonewall Jackson Shrine" has been rechristened "Stonewall Jackson Death Site" to provide clarity for prospective visitors. "Shrine," historically used as a word for "museum," has become antiquated and, so, confusing to many people.

A subtle but important change is underway at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FSNMP): The site where Stonewall Jackson died is getting renamed. The building formerly known as the Stonewall Jackson Shrine will henceforth be officially referred to as the Stonewall Jackson Death Site.

The reason for the change, says FSNMP Chief Historian and Chief of Interpretation John Hennessy, is to help give visitors a clearer sense of what they will find during their visit.

"[T]he name 'Jackson Shrine' is not very helpful to visitors," he says. "Most people have no idea what to expect. They expect a shrine in a modern sense, and of course, the term 'shrine,' which was commonly used for a historic site in the 1920s, is hardly ever used in that context today."

The name "Jackson Shrine" dates back to a casual reference in a newspaper article written by Virginia Lee Cox for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* on November 16, 1926:

> *Yesterday in the simple, little, frame house near Guinea Station where, on May 10, 1863, General Stonewall Jackson died, a group of interested women transformed the bare, little room in which he "crossed over the river" into some semblance of its original setting, and made there the beginnings of a Jackson Museum which they hope will grow into a fitting tribute to one of the South's great heroes.*
>
> *The group which yesterday made that first pilgrimage to the Jackson Shrine was composed of…*

At the time, the word "shrine" was a commonly used synonym for museum. For instance, a 1934 pamphlet published by the Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development, *Historic Shrines of Virginia*, listed 35 sites, including "Jackson's Deathplace."

The Fredericksburg area had a plethora of shrines once upon a time. On October 13, 1928,

A rock garden on the railroad-facing side of the building let train passengers know about the significance of the site as they passed by. The Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad owned the site for years and operated it as a tourist stop.

reporting on the dedication of Jackson's death site as a museum, the local newspaper boasted, "This section, already rich in historic shrines, and due in the future to boast even more, had another shrine added to its list yesterday when the house in which 'Stonewall' Jackson died was formally dedicated as a place where lovers of history and heroism might journey and worship."

Over time, though, the name "Jackson Shrine" became confusing, sparking the addition of the general's familiar nickname in 1979.

"A startling percentage of my audience expressed surprise to know that the Jackson in question was the Civil War commander," recounted historian A. Wilson Greene, who used to work at the site, in the foreword of his book, *Whatever You Resolve to Be: Essays on Stonewall Jackson*. "Most of the confused inquired about 'Old Hickory,'" Greene said, referring to former president Andrew Jackson, another Southern military commander with a catchy nickname — "Old Hickory" — who first earned renown in the War of 1812.

But the '70s also saw the Jackson Five peak in popularity, and Reggie "Mr. October" Jackson make five trips to the World Series, creating additional layers of cultural confusion. "[W]hen more families than would be palatable to quantify expressed disappointment that they had driven so far out of their way to see a house that had nothing to do with either Reggie Jackson or Michael Jackson, I knew something had to be done," Green realized.

"The notion that athletic figures or pop culture icons would be confused for the 'real' Jackson had been unthinkable" to the Park Service, which changed the name to "The Stonewall Jackson Shrine" to clarify. "Instantly, devotees of popular music stopped coming to Guinea Station." Greene wrote.

The most recent name change was sparked by a similar desire for clarity — this time, because the term "shrine" as originally used is largely unfamiliar to modern travelers.

"[W]e get people who come in who are bristling from the start because, 'What is this? Why are our tax dollars running a shrine to Stonewall Jackson?'" Hennessy says. "And then

The Stonewall Jackson Death Site as it appears today. *Terry Rensel*

we also get people coming in from the start not expecting objective, holistic interpretation — expecting a kind of invitation to mourn. That's not what the site is."

The new name, he says, "puts the site on more-neutral ground for visitors coming in. Just makes for a better environment for us to do our work."

Park officials also hope clarifying the name will diffuse contemporary concerns.

"There's no question that in the present tumult over Confederate symbols and icons in the aftermath of Charleston and, especially, in the aftermath of Charlottesville, there was a good deal of chatter online that we saw about 'What is this shrine to Jackson? It needs to go,'" Hennessy says. That, in turn, raised security issues.

The name change offered a way for the park to address this. "It's such a simple thing to remove that aspect of it without altering the site, without altering the experience," Hennessy says. "The focus is still on Jackson's death and why it mattered and why it matters."

"It remains our most personal site," he adds. "One, it's the only site that we have that's focused on an individual. And secondly, it's the site where our visitors have the most personal experience with our staff. It's often one on one, or one [ranger] and a family. And so it's a site that has tremendous interpretive potential that … all our staff who's worked there over the years has recognized."

Greene described it as "an experience that still ranks as among the more evocative of all Civil War site visits."

"And none of that, none of that is changing," Hennessy stresses.

New highway signs — the most visible indication of the name change — went up in August at a cost of $50,000. "But other than the signs, everything else will be replaced in due course on a normal schedule," Hennessy says. "So the cost of doing it is really confined to the signage."

Hennessy says the park staff has been using the new name internally for about a year, and the park's website reflects the shift. Otherwise, he predicts the name change will take about three years for the park to fully implement.

"It will have to filter its way through other media," he explains. "Our brochures, for example, were reprinted last summer just before we … made the decision," and it will take approximately three years to exhaust the supply.

For the park's outside partners, the name change may take even longer. "Our tourism partners, localities — it's probably going to take five to seven years to filter through entirely," Hennessy says. "And, you know, in 20 years, there will probably still be people out there who'll call it 'Stonewall Jackson Shrine.' That's just the way these things work."

In the end, he says, visitors can bring whatever perspective they want to the site. "To some eyes, it will remain a 'shrine,' and that's fine. Our intent is not to impose on any visitor how they ought to view the site," he says.

While the name change might be a "significant issue" for some, Hennessy thinks the benefits far outweigh those issues. "'The Jackson Shrine' was an informal name," he says. "It is not a legally applied name. It's not in our legislation or anything of that sort.

"[B]ecause the nature of the site's not changing, and we think it really serves our visitors and serves the site, too, and its security, we think it's the right thing to do," he adds. "So we're forging ahead."