

Winter 2023

# On The FRONT LINE

CENTRAL VIRGINIA BATTLEFIELDS TRUST

[www.CVBT.org](http://www.CVBT.org)



FALLEN LEADERS



7



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 Executive Editor, Thomas Van Winkle  
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Cover Photo:  
**Brig. Gen. James Wadsworth memorial**  
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Brig. Gen. James Wadsworth  
*Library of Congress*

**ON THE COVER:**

In 1936, Brig. Gen. James Wadsworth's grandson and namesake, Congressman James Wadsworth, erected a monument to his fallen ancestor. The monument sits slightly west of the actual site of Wadsworth's mortal wounding.

A millionaire, Wadsworth served without accepting salary, believing in the idea of *noblesse oblige*. In 1862, he ran as the Republican candidate for governor in his home state of New York, but he refused to leave his post to campaign, which resulted in his loss.

Wadsworth's brigade had a rough time of it in the Wilderness, driven from the field twice before finding themselves, on May 6, in the thick of the fray for yet a third time. As Wadsworth tried to rally his men to hold their position, his horse carried him into Confederate range. Shot in the head, he lingered insensible for days.

A local farmer whom Wadsworth had released from jail early in the war, Patrick McCracken, came to the battlefield to tend to the general who had once shown him mercy. McCracken also arranged to return Wadsworth's body to Geneseo, New York, for burial, where he remains today.

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles wrote of Wadsworth that "few nobler spirits have fallen.... No purer or more single-minded patriot than Wadsworth has shown himself in this war. He left home and comforts and wealth to fight the battles of the Union."

It has become colder, the leaves are down, and frost has already visited the pumpkins. The holidays are here. How did this happen already?

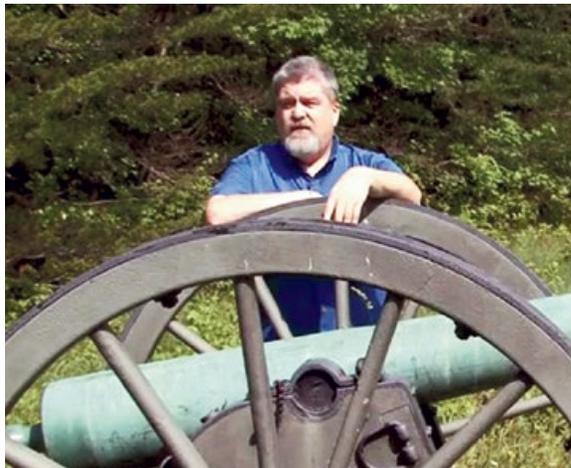
We at CVBT have again presented a successful sold-out annual conference. This year, from September 30 through October 1, we visited Fredericksburg, covering the bombardment of the town, the Federal river crossing, the sacking of the town from a civilian perspective, and the main battle itself. We also held a screening of *Fire on the Rappahannock*, the popular film featuring the battle of Fredericksburg's 150th anniversary reenactment, which included thousands of reenactors on the very streets where the actual fighting took place in 1862.

Acclaimed historians Frank O'Reilly, John Hennessy, Greg Mertz, Sarah Kay Bierle, Scott Walker, and Robert Lee Hodge all pitched in with spectacular programs to make the weekend special. A rare viewing of the historic Sentry Box home was added to the weekend, courtesy of CVBT Board Member Charlie McDaniel. You may read more about the conference elsewhere in this issue of *On The Front Line*.

During the conference, I announced yet another preservation success for 2022: the purchase of a new portion of the famed "Stonewall" Jackson Flank Attack. Those who attended our outdoor 25th anniversary event in 2021 will recognize the new two-acre parcel as the adjoining property to the flank attack land we employed for our "under the tent" Saturday evening dinner and programs. This latest parcel continues our now-23-year effort to stitch together the famous route.

In 2022, we have also assisted the American Battlefield Trust (the Trust) in purchasing Todd's Tavern, more than 140 acres of important battlefield between the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. Currently, we are fundraising for half of the balance left on another joint venture with our partners at the Trust, Chancellorsville's Dowdall's Tavern. We are splitting the remaining balance and raising \$67,500 to conclude this project, preserving an additional 42 acres of the Jackson Flank Attack.

I also announced an addendum to the CVBT's mission statement. For years, CVBT has focused on protecting the four major battlefields in our Central Virginia area: Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. This does not mean we have not been keeping an eye on other relevant battlefields that relate to the core area where we have been such good stewards for more than a quarter of a century. For this reason, we have added the Mine Run Campaign to our portfolio.



Tom Van Winkle

Those who are students of this great conflict are aware that this period in November of 1863, in Orange County, Virginia, is often noted as the "Battle that Never Happened." General George Meade had been, let us say, "coaxed" by his superiors in Washington to engage Gen. Robert E. Lee after Gettysburg, with lackluster results. Although a battle did take place at Payne's Farm, the campaign fell apart once Lee fell back and set his defenses along Mine Run. The Federals thought better of attacking. The area and roads used in this campaign align in many ways to the opening of the Overland Campaign's Wilderness battle in May of 1864—and thus the tie-in with CVBT's mission statement. We assembled a research committee to review the opportunities, and the result was a resounding, "Yes, this needs protection."

Payne's Farm has been thankfully preserved by the Trust, but there is much more work that needs to be accomplished at Mine Run. Pristine earthworks span privately owned properties. Development and solar complexes threaten to destroy many cultural and historical resources in the county. More of this campaign's story needs to be told. CVBT is needed there, so we will answer the call.

As ever, CVBT marches on and continues preserving our history with your help. Enjoy this issue of *On The Front Line*.

Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Van Winkle".

Tom Van Winkle

President, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## Executive Director Letter

It's been a busy summer and fall around the CVBT office. We had a lot of work to do to make the Annual Conference happen and are well on our way to planning next year's event, which will take place October 6–8, 2023, and will focus on Chancellorsville. Mark your calendar now,



Terry Rensel

and look for more details about it on our website early in the new year.

In the days leading up to this year's conference, the Stonewall Brigade III preservation opportunity presented itself, and I was able to sign the contract on that right before the conference. By the time you get this issue of *On The Front Line*, you will

have received our fundraising appeal

for it. (Don't let that stop you from supporting our effort a second time if the spirit so moves you!)

Late last year, we began a collaboration with a group known as Downtown Greens, which is dedicated to preserving greenspace in the city of Fredericksburg. The particular tract we've focused on is literally right across the street from the CVBT office and will preserve property associated with the battle of Second Fredericksburg. We are excited to not only help them preserve a significant amount of greenspace, but also to be able to tell an oft-overlooked story.

We continue fundraising for the Dowdall's Tavern property at Chancellorsville, assisting the American Battlefield Trust with its work there. We're also signed on as partners in the Wilderness Crossing Coalition, which has its cautious eye on a major potential development on the edge of the Wilderness Battlefield. You can learn more about both of these efforts on our website, [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org).

I hope to be able to wrap up the preservation easement work on Myer's Hill early in the new year and begin planning how to open that property to public access and interpretation. In the meantime, we continue working on additional preservation opportunities throughout the area, and I look forward to being able to share them with you as they happen.

Be well, thank you for supporting battlefield preservation, and I look forward to seeing you on the battlefield.

### Save the Date for next year's CVBT Annual Conference:

1863: Chancellorsville, The Crossroads of Fire

October 6–8, 2023 • Details to be announced in early 2023

## Delving Deeper

# Spotsy's Brock Road Fifth Corps Tract and the Death of Brig. Gen. James Clay Rice

BY TIM TALBOTT

“We are going again to our duty to bravely offer up our life for that of our country, and, through God, we shall do it valiantly.” So wrote, Brig. Gen. James Clay Rice in his last letter to his mother a short time before his May 10, 1864, mortal wounding at Spotsylvania Court House. When we think of Union general officer casualties during the Overland Campaign, the first names that come to mind are John Sedgwick, James Wadsworth, and Alexander Hays—men who have battlefield monuments to honor them. But perhaps Rice should receive inclusion on this list: as his short life and military career illustrate, he was a man of commitment, kindness, and achievement.

Born in 1828 in Worthington, Massachusetts, to a family with American roots that dated to the 17th century, James Clay Rice graduated from Yale University in 1853. After a short teaching stint in Natchez, Mississippi, Rice studied law in New York City. He was a practicing attorney when the Civil War erupted. “Imbued by a lofty patriotism he responded to the first call to arms and never faltered in the discharge of his duty,” an admirer later wrote. Eagerly enlisting, Rice served as a captain in the 39th New York at the Battle of First Manassas. Soon after his initial trial by fire, Rice received the lieutenant colonelcy of the 44th New York Infantry. During the summer of 1862, Rice became commander of the regiment.

Colonel Rice led the 44th New York at Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. During the Battle of Gettysburg, Rice took command of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Fifth Corps after Col. Strong Vincent received a mortal wound. The regiment was key in the defense of Little Round Top. During the battle, Rice received the surrender of Lt. Col. Michael J. Bulger, 47th Alabama, and made arrangements for the wounded Confederate to receive medical care. Rice's formal promotion to brigadier general came on August 17, 1863.

Sentiments expressed in last letters to his brother and mother show that Rice fully understood the importance of what would become known as the Overland Campaign. He also accepted those challenges willingly. “I enter upon this campaign cheerfully and happy, for I love my county more than my life,” Rice penned to his brother. To his mother he wrote, “We are about to commence the campaign, the greatest in



**Brig. Gen. James C. Rice's Brigade deployed for battle on May 10, 1864, on land now preserved by CVBT. Chris Mackowski**

magnitude, strength and importance since the beginning of the war." To both, Rice expressed his faith in God and expectations of meeting them in the afterlife should he fall in battle.

Commanding the 2nd Brigade, 4th Division, Fifth Corps, Rice's regiments suffered high casualties during the desperate Wilderness fighting. At Spotsylvania Court House, Rice's New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians fought to dislodge the Confederates at the Spindle Farm on May 8–9, 1864. When fighting continuing on May 10, General Rice—eager to have his troops relieved—mounted an earthwork to attempt to shout some instructions. As he did, a Confederate sharpshooter's bullet "hit him in the left thigh, the ball furrowing the leg to the knee, severing the femoral artery," a regimental historian wrote. "It was sometime before a tourniquet could be applied, so that



**Brig. Gen. James C. Rice rose to command because his brigade's previous commander, Brig Gen. Strong Vincent, was killed atop Little Round Top during the battle of Gettysburg the previous July. NPS**

there was great exhaustion and shock from loss of blood before the hospital was reached." The wound required amputation, but his condition proved too severe. Before succumbing to his injury, Rice requested, "Turn me over. Toward the enemy, let me die with my face to the foe."

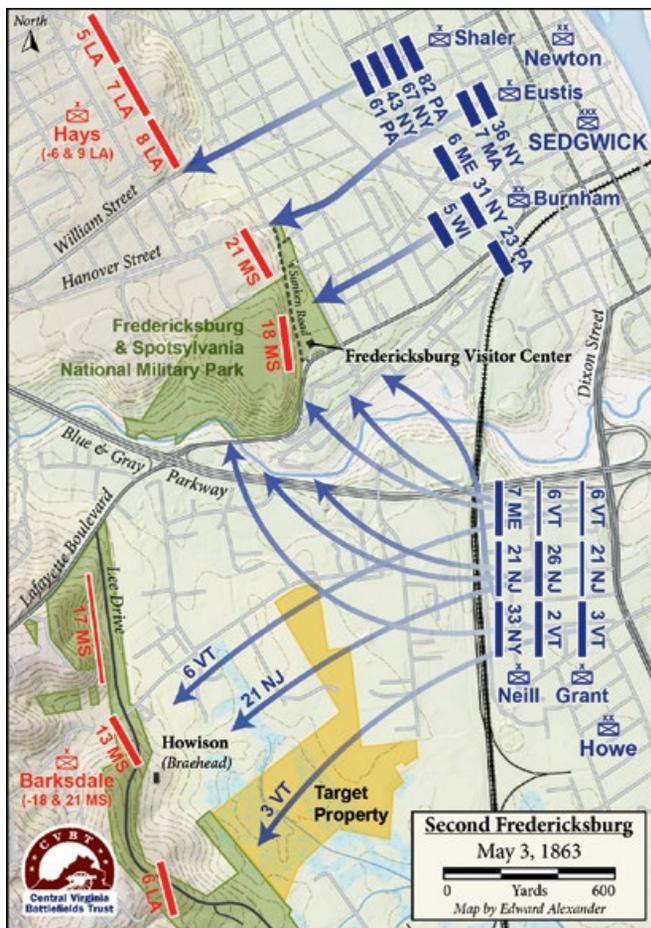
Eulogized widely throughout the army and back home in speeches, song, and verse, Rice's body was sent to Albany, New York, where it received burial at Albany Rural Cemetery. "Young, brave, ardent, enthusiastic ..." and "[e]ver faithful to his trust," said Gov. Horatio Seymour, "he was the gallant leader of his command, and in the midst of a brilliant career, he fell upon the battle-field. ..."

Ground where Rice's brigade advanced to the works, now known as the Brock Road Fifth Corps property, was protected in 2018 by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust.

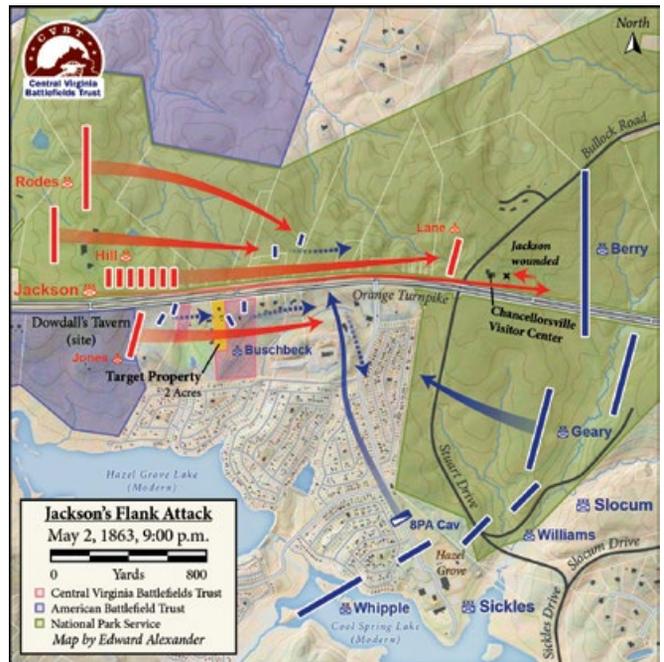
## CVBT Announces Two Preservation Projects

CVBT is collaborating with Downtown Greens, a Fredericksburg nonprofit whose mission is to foster community involvement and growth by protecting and nurturing urban greenspace through collaborative environmental stewardship and experiential education. The project will preserve 56 acres of farmland inside the Battlefield Industrial Park in the city of Fredericksburg (below). This property contains wetlands, mature trees, and nearly 20 acres of the last working agricultural space in the city.

Elements of the Union VI Corps marched across, and attacked from, this land during the Battle of Second Fredericksburg as part of the Chancellorsville Campaign on May 3, 1863. CVBT is contributing \$10,000 to assist Downtown



Support from CVBT will help preserve ground related to the battle of Second Fredericksburg. The advance of the 3rd Vermont allowed Federals to outflank the Confederate position, directly leading to the withdrawal of Barksdale's Confederate brigade from the southern part of their defensive position.



CVBT's latest project continues our long-term effort to piece together Stonewall Jackson's Flank Attack. The target property abuts property CVBT already owns.

Greens with the purchase of the property and will be providing interpretive waysides telling the story of the battle and the troops who marched across this land.

CVBT has also purchased two acres on the south side of Route 3 in Chancellorsville as part of our continuing efforts to stitch together Jackson's Flank Attack (above).

The property, which we are calling the Stonewall Brigade III tract, is just west of the Chancellorsville Visitors Center, and next to our previously saved Stonewall Brigade tract, the location of last year's annual meeting and banquet. We closed on the property in mid-October for \$310,000.

Along with our other Stonewall Brigade tracts, this land would have been crossed by many of the retreating soldiers of the XI Corps. They were pursued by Doles's Georgia Brigade in the front line of the attack, then Warren's Virginia Brigade and Colquitt's Georgia Brigade. In the evening, units from A.P. Hill's division would pass to the front, and these tracts bore soldiers from Lane's North Carolina Brigade, and McGowan's South Carolina Brigade. Paxton's Virginia Brigade—the famous "Stonewall" Brigade—was posted there during the overnight hours.

This marks our 12th flank attack preservation project, either on our own or partnered with the American Battlefield Trust, for a total of almost 475 acres.

## Familiar Faces Join CVBT's Board of Directors

In September, historian and author Gordon C. Rhea joined the CVBT Board of Directors.

Gordon received his B.A. in history from Indiana University, his M.A. in history from Harvard University, and his law degree from Stanford University Law School. He served as special assistant to the chief counsel of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities for two years and as an assistant United States attorney in Washington, D.C., and the United States Virgin Islands for seven years. He has been in private practice since 1983.

An author as well, Gordon has written eight award-winning books about the American Civil War: *The Battle of the Wilderness*; *The Battles at Spotsylvania Court House, and the Road to Yellow Tavern*; *To the North Anna River*; *Cold Harbor*; *On to Petersburg*; *Carrying the Flag*; *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee*; and *Stephen A. Swails: Black Freedom Fighter in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. He has lectured across the country at the invitation of numerous historical societies, universities, and historic preservation organizations on topics

of military history and the Civil War era and has served on the boards of several historical societies, history magazines, and historical preservation organizations. Gordon conducts tours for organizations that raise funds to purchase and preserve historical sites related to the Civil War era, including the



Gordon Rhea

American Battlefield Trust, the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, the Blue and Gray Education Society, and the Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield. He has also appeared multiple times as a historian and presenter on nationwide television programs, including productions by History (formerly The History Channel), A&E, Discovery, and C-Span.

In April, historian and author John Hennessy joined the Board.

John recently retired as the chief historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, where he worked for the final 26 years of his NPS career. Before coming to Fredericksburg, he worked as an exhibit planner for NPS



John Hennessy

sites across the country and, as an opening act, as a front-line ranger-historian at Manassas National Battlefield Park, where he began his career. He is the author of four books, most notably, *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas*. His books, articles, and essays have been published by Simon & Schuster, Cambridge University Press, Stackpole

Books, LSU Press, and the University of North Carolina Press, as well as another dozen publications. He continues writing and speaking about history and preservation. In the coming years, he will be working on projects relating to the history of the Fredericksburg region during the war, the Army of the Potomac, slavery and freedom in the Rappahannock region, and a study of the care and relief of the wounded in the battles around Fredericksburg.

Late last year, former CVBT Board Member Kevin Leahy rejoined board.

Kevin has had a lifelong interest in history, with a particular passion for the Civil War, and this passion led to an undergraduate degree in history from Radford University. He started his career with the National Park Service (NPS) as a park ranger before leaving to work for the United States Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia. Upon moving to Spotsylvania County, he joined the CVBT Board and was heavily involved



Kevin Leahy

in the fight to save the May 1 battlefield at Chancellorsville. Following that victory, Kevin then led a political action committee that saw the election of a preservation-minded majority to the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors. He was appointed to the county's Planning Commission and the Economic Development Authority. Stepping away from local politics, Kevin

devoted his time to coaching youth soccer and is currently on the coaching staff of the Massaponax High School Boys Soccer program. He and his family (along with a dog, a bird, and four gerbils) live in Spotsylvania County. This is his third time serving on the Board of CVBT.

## 2022 CVBT Annual Conference

The 2022 CVBT Annual Conference took place September 30–October 2, 2022. This year’s theme was *1862: The War Comes to Fredericksburg*. The weekend included:

- Friday evening President’s Reception at the CVBT office.
- Screening of *Fire on the Rappahannock*, the official commemorative film of the 150th anniversary reenactment of the battle of Fredericksburg.
- Battlefield tour of the Upper Crossing and street fighting by National Park Service historian Frank O’Reilly.
- Lunch at Brock’s Riverside Grille and Alpine Chef.
- Middle Crossing and Rocky Lane battlefield tour by American Battlefield Trust historian Sarah Kay Bierle.
- Tour of the historic Sentry Box with owners Charles and Mary Wynn McDaniel and presentations about the fighting around the house by historians Robert Lee Hodge and Tim Talbott.
- Battlefield tour of Prospect Hill with Frank O’Reilly.



Sarah Kay Bierle talks about the Federal river crossing at the site of middle pontoon bridge. Jennifer Michael

CVBT President Tom Van Winkle presented the annual Dr. Mike Stevens Award to Bruce “Doc” Norton of the Fredericksburg Civil War Round Table for the roundtable’s years of work supporting preservation. Terry Rensel



- Banquet and Annual Meeting at Geri Melchers’ Belmont in Falmouth. At the annual meeting, Tom Van Winkle presented the Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award to the Civil War Roundtable of Fredericksburg. Keynote speaker John Hennesy also gave a presentation about the Union Army’s Spring 1862 occupation of Fredericksburg.
- Sunday brunch at Stevenson’s Ridge, including a Battle of Fredericksburg Historian Roundtable featuring Sarah Kay Bierle, Robert Lee Hodge, Greg Mertz, Scott Walker, and Tom Van Winkle, moderated by local radio host Ted Schubel.

The 2023 conference will take place October 6–8, 2023, and the theme is *1863: Chancellorsville, The Crossroads of Fire*



Panelists Tom Van Winkle, Robert Lee Hodge, Sarah Kay Bierle, Greg Mertz, and Scott Walker offered answers and insights about the battle of Fredericksburg during a Sunday morning Q&A. Terry Rensel



Historian Frank O’Reilly, a local favorite, treated attendees to a walk along Prospect Hill. Jennifer Michael



Historian John Hennessey keynoted the banquet with a talk about the civilian experience during the war. Terry Rensel



CVBT Board Member Charles McDaniel offered a private tour of his Civil War armaments collection. Jennifer Michael

## The American Battlefield Trust

Sometimes it's nice to have the 800-pound gorilla in the room as your best friend. That's certainly been the case for CVBT when it comes to the American Battlefield Trust. As the nation's largest nonprofit organization devoted to the preservation of America's hallowed battlegrounds, the Trust has been able to leverage its weight in ways that have made CVBT's work far easier.

"I like to explain CVBT's working relationship with the Trust like this," says CVBT President Tom Van Winkle: "As a national organization, the Trust has the 30-thousand-foot view; CVBT, as the local preservation group, is able to see the small parcels that the Trust might not be able to see from that altitude. But then, when we need their help on a parcel, the Trust swoops in and gets into the trenches with us."

Over its 35-year history, the Trust has permanently protected more than 55,000 acres of hallowed ground at 150 separate sites representing three wars, and in 2022, it completed work in its 25th state. Although primarily focused on the protection of Civil War battlefields, the Trust also works to save the battlefields connected to the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, as well. Through educational programs and heritage tourism initiatives, the Trust informs the public about the vital role battlefields played in determining the course of our nation's history.

The Trust and CVBT have partnered on a multitude of projects over the past two and a half decades. The Trust was involved in CVBT's very first acquisition, 9.5 acres on Willis Hill atop Fredericksburg's Marye's Heights, in 1997. "We've been partners since day one," said Van Winkle.

The most notable collaboration was the 16-year, \$12-million effort to protect the Slaughter Pen Farm on the south end of the Fredericksburg Battlefield. CVBT ponied up a million dollars early in that effort. In the summer of 2022, the Trust announced it had made final payment on the note. It was, said the Trust, "the largest and most complex private battlefield preservation effort in the nation's history."



**American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan (right) presents CVBT President Tom Van Winkle and Executive Director Terry Rensel with a map showing the properties the two organizations have preserved in central Virginia.**  
*Lisa Van Winkle*

Most recently, CVBT and the Trust worked together to secure property at Todd's Tavern along Brock Road in Spotsylvania County—an important site related to the 1864 Overland Campaign. The two groups also worked together to secure several parcels at Chancellorsville along Stonewall Jackson's Flank Attack, including Dowdall's Tavern, where Jackson issued his final battlefield order before being accidentally wounded by his own men.

"It's no secret that property values in the Fredericksburg area have skyrocketed in the last two decades, with a noticeable jump just in the past five," Van Winkle said. "That has started to put some key pieces of property beyond our reach alone. Fortunately, the Trust is always eager to partner with us to get these larger, more complicated deals done. They have not only the financial resources, but also logistical resources that have proven invaluable. We're lucky to have a national partner so committed to preservation in our local area."

# Fallen LEADERS

BY CHRIS MACKOWSKI

It's May 9, and I'm at the Spotsylvania Court House battlefield. I'm here to pay my respects to Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick, the Union VI Corps commander killed here on this date in 1864. His men loved him so much they called him "Uncle John." He returned the affection and, on that fateful Monday, had gone to the front to reposition some of his men in an effort to help them avoid harassing sharpshooter fire. Moments before the fatal shot hit him, he had tried to reassure his men: "They can't hit an elephant at this distance."

An oak tree, lush with green, offers a canopy over the granite monument that marks the spot of Sedgwick's death. It's the oldest formal monument in Spotsylvania and Fredericksburg National Military Park, dedicated in 1887, and it stands like a forgotten chess piece at the entrance to the battlefield. As a major general, and as the highest-ranking Union officer killed in the entire Civil War, Sedgwick should be a knight or a rook ("bishop," I suppose, is reserved only for Confederate Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk, an Episcopal bishop, killed June 14, 1864, on Pine Mountain outside Atlanta). Sedgwick's monument, however, makes him look little more than a pawn in the grand match waged in the spring of 1864 between Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee.

I come here each year to pay my respects to Uncle John. Tomorrow, on May 10, I'll go to the far side of the Spotsy



Iron fences, like the one around the Sedgwick Monument at Spotsylvania, were a popular fixture. The fence has since been removed. NPS



Beloved by his men, Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick was killed while seeing to their welfare. His monument reportedly marks the spot of his death. Jennifer Michael

battlefield to pay my respects to Brig. Gen. Thomas Greely Stevenson, a IX Corps division commander killed by a fluke Confederate overshot. The site of his death, as forgotten as Stevenson generally is, is lost somewhere near the overflow pond of a small neighborhood.

Also killed that day in 1864, closer to the site of Sedgwick's death, was Brig. Gen. James Clay "Old Crazy" Rice. With a nickname like that, I always thought he should be better remembered. Alas, no. In 2018, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust preserved the land where he met his untimely end, so perhaps there's an opportunity for a comeback of sorts. His alleged final words, "Turn me over that I may die with my face to the enemy," are too good to resist.

The most famous death of May 10, of course, happened a year earlier. In the afternoon, I'll travel to the Stonewall Jackson Death Site to pay my respects—my oldest battlefield tradition, dating back some two decades. Jackson died May 10, 1863. The clock on the fireplace mantel of the room he died in has ticked away the hours since.

The circumstances of Jackson's death, so well known in Civil War circles, have become so mythologized that it's hard to see



The site of Stonewall Jackson's wounding at Chancellorsville became a pilgrimage for veterans of both sides. NPS

the heart of the story. His last days spawned a quartz boulder, a granite monument, a visitor center, several state historical markers, Civil War Trails signs, an ambulance route, a "shrine" (now more soberly referred to as his "Death Site"), and perhaps most infamously, a monument for his amputated left arm. This roadside industry for travelers tells us much about the people who created these landmarks and those who use and visit them, but it otherwise obfuscates Jackson himself. In the same way that the trauma of his wounding and the amputation of his arm hid the fact that he was sick, the commemoration of the iconic general hides his personal story as a father and husband.

Yet, to me, that's where the power of Jackson's story lies: he exemplifies the poignant, deeply felt tragedy that befell some 720,000 families. Telling his story at the Death Site is not about revering a war hero or lamenting some supposed turning point of the conflict, it's about looking closely at the heartbreaking cost of war up close. What of Jackson's young widow? What of his infant daughter? What



Somewhere around the bend, on the backside of this ridge along Everett Court, IX Corps division commander Brig. Gen. Thomas Greely Stevenson was killed by a Confederate overshoot on the morning of May 10, 1864, during the battle of Spotsylvania Court House. Chris Mackowski



Overland Campaign historian Gordon Rhea has called Brig. Gen. Thomas Greely Stevenson arguably the best division commander in the Union IX Corps. Stevenson Ridge

would it be like to never know your father even as you were constantly forced to live in the shadow of his fame?

This was, by far, the most important lesson I learned over the years at the Stonewall Jackson Death Site. The individual stories of fallen leaders are worth examination for many reasons—which my colleagues will explore in the following pages—but most importantly, they humanize a tragedy that otherwise becomes abstract in its scope.

After paying my annual respects at the Jackson Death Site, I will travel back to Spotsylvania Court House to walk in the footsteps of Col. Emory Upton, who led a late-day attack against the Mule Shoe Salient. Upton survived the failed assault, but I can't help but think ahead to his sad end years later. Despite a brilliant, influential career, he suffered from depression triggered by the early death of his wife, and he struggled with intense migraines most probably caused by a brain tumor. His sufferings led him to take his own life in March 1881.

Across the battlefield on that same May 10 afternoon, Brig. Gen. Hobart Ward also pierced the Confederate line. His success was overshadowed two days later when, according to his superior, he was "grossly intoxicated" during the attack on the Mule Shoe. "[D]rinking more than proper" erased him from nearly all but the most diligent remembrances of the battle.

Such "falls from grace" abound. Look at George McClellan on the eve of the Fredericksburg campaign, or Ambrose Burnside in its aftermath. Or Joe Hooker after Chancellorsville. Look at James Longstreet's long, slow postwar fade, his reputation every bit the victim of the Lost Cause as Ulysses S. Grant's.

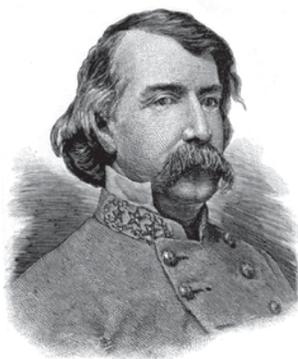
What circumstances led to their falls? What was under their control and what was beyond? How did strengths become weaknesses? How might a greater degree of self-awareness have saved any of them? What can we learn about ourselves by looking at the situations?

Spotsy gives us the deaths of Confederate generals Junius Daniel and Abner Perrin. It gives us the woundings of Stephen Ramseur and Samuel McGowan (one of the Civil War's biggest bullet magnets). That same day, May 12, saw the death of Confederate cavalry commander Jeb Stuart following the battle of Yellow Tavern just north of Richmond the day before. Coupled with

## FALLEN LEADERS

the grievous wounding of James Longstreet in the Wilderness days earlier on May 6, the loss of Stuart represented the end of Robert E. Lee's "A-Team." Ever after, the Army of Northern Virginia had to rely on second- and third-stringers who never lived up to the ANV's previous successes. I can almost see Robert E. Lee sitting in a Richmond tavern with Bruce Springsteen in the background singing 'bout "Glory Days."

Leaders fell on all of our area battlefields, either killed, wounded, or captured. Their tales are filled with bravery, sadness, drama, and irony. Confederate Maj. Gen. Frank "Bull" Paxton, hand-picked by his hometown friend Stonewall Jackson to lead the Stonewall Brigade, died at Chancellorsville while leading the brigade into battle on the second-bloodiest day of the war; it was as if Jackson had hand-picked his friend to die. Somewhere opposite Paxton, Union Maj. Gen. Hiram Berry fell in that same fight while carrying orders to his men. His commander and friend, Joe Hooker, reportedly wept when



**Brig. Gen. John M. "Rum" Jones graduated in the West Point Class of 1841 with classmates John F. Reynolds, Nathaniel Lyon, Richard B. Garnett, Amiel Whipple, and Isreal Richardson—all of whom would fall in combat during the Civil War.**  
*Library of Congress*

Confederate Brig. Gen. John M. "Rum" Jones wore a different aura of invulnerability into battle. He escaped death at Mine Run in November 1863, despite a head wound—only to be killed just a few miles away, as the crow flies, on the first day of the battle of the Wilderness. Visitors to Saunders Field can walk up the rubberized path from the exhibit shelter to the treeline and see a small aluminum marker that tells the story of his fall—although he fell on the south side of the road, not the north. At least he has a marker.

he saw the corpse. Paxton and Berry are memorialized with a road co-named after them that runs through the heart of the battlefield.

Union Maj. Gen. Amiel Whipple, killed the next day by a sniper's bullet, goes without any such recognition. "How any bullet ever pierced General Whipple's armor of dirt is a mystery," one wag later wondered. "I considered him perfectly safe from any missile weighing less than a ton, having a casing of dirt of unknown thickness supposed to be invulnerable." That seems a sad final testimonial.



**Confederate Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's wounding in the Wilderness had huge ramifications for the Overland Campaign.**  
*From Manassas to Appomattox*

Would men like Whipple and Rice and Stevenson be better remembered if they had markers or monuments? Or is it because they're not better remembered that they don't have monument and markers? Would we know their stories better if the ground where tragedy befell them had been preserved and we could walk in their footsteps to better understand their last days, hours, minutes?

My intent is not to go from battle to battle and list off the names of the fallen. Where would one even stop? Generals only? Colonels? How far down the chain of command do we go? What of enlisted men who carried the moral authority to command their peers' respect? What impact did their losses carry? How would we even know all their names?

One of John Sedgwick's subordinates, a captain from Exeter, Maine, Sewell Gray, summed it up poignantly as he went into battle of May 3, 1863, at Second Fredericksburg. It was a Sunday, and the day had dawned bright and warm. "Sabbath and a lovelier day never overtook a soldier," Gray wrote in his diary, just minutes before he would be shot leading his men to victory. "If we fall, God strengthen the bereaved."

Each spring, as I travel from site to site, day by day, I recall these stories and pay my respects to these fallen leaders. It is my way to remember the tens of thousands of men just like them who otherwise go unremembered. We are all called to walk these hallowed ground and remember their stories: not the stories of heroes, but of people just like you and me, with families just like ours. Their bereaved are just as ours would be. Their tragedies are our stories.



**Brig. Gen. Elisha Franklin "Bull" Paxton, a hometown friend of Stonewall Jackson's, was killed leading the Stonewall Brigade at Chancellorsville. A monument along Stuart Drive marks the site.**  
*Jennifer Michael*

## ON FALLEN LEADERS

Thinking about leaders who fell on the battlefield or walking in their footsteps until the point of the fatal or painful moment emphasizes both principles of leadership and followership. We can recognize the impact that a leader had on those under his command and on the outcome of the fight. Whether that leader was a general, a regimental officer, or an enlisted man who sprang into a leadership role, the sudden void of his presence affected those around him in profoundly human ways and sometimes turned the tide of a battle engagement at a particular location.

— **Sarah Kay Bierle**, *Managing Editor, Emerging Civil War*

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So many valuable officers of both armies are lost, creating voids in leadership. For instance, at the Battle of Chancellorsville, the loss of Army of the Potomac Gen. Hiram Berry led to most of his division being led off the battlefield, causing further losses of men on May 3, 1863. During the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, the Confederate Army loses a third of its leading officers—including Gens. James Longstreet and Jeb Stuart—creating a serious void in leadership. The Union's loss of officers created a morale issue in various units.

— **Steward Henderson**, *historian, Emerging Civil War*

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Those who fell reflected those who remained, soldier and civilian alike. Their deaths often prompted intense reflection on the virtues and (rarely) foibles of the fallen and their cause. That in turn offers historians a vivid window on the dynamics of the time and, later, the process of myth-making, with all the challenges that represented (and represents) for our society.

— **John Hennessy**, *historian*

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Many leaders fell in the midst of making important decisions or adjustments regarding their troops. In just looking at the Federal breakthrough at Fredericksburg, Confederate Gen. Maxcy Gregg fell while mistakenly identifying attacking Federal soldiers as retreating Confederate skirmishers, allowing the enemy to get close enough to scatter his brigade. Federal Gen. C. Feger Jackson and an aide about to deliver him an order to shift his troops to the point where the blue-clad soldiers had achieved a breakthrough in the Confederate line were both killed at what may have been a critical moment to exploit Union success.

— **Greg Mertz**, *historian*

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By the time the Army of Northern Virginia gets to Spotsylvania, Lee has lost his right and left hands in Jackson and Longstreet, as well as dozens of divisional, brigade, and regimental commanders who could not be replaced due to manpower

limitations. At a moment when Lee's need for experienced leaders was at its greatest, he had to rely on inexperienced, new-to-their-position leaders who were not up to the task in the moment. As a result, he does not have faith in them to get the job done, which limits what the army can do moving forward.

— **Terry Rensel**, *Executive Director, CVBT*

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Visiting sites where major figures received mortal wounds can tell us much about the circumstances that led to those deaths and about the figures themselves. Whenever I'm near Yellow Tavern, I visit the Jeb Stuart memorial beside the old Telegraph Road on a bluff above Turner's Run. It was there on May 11, 1864, that Stuart's cavalymen dismounted and formed a defensive line to repel Phil Sheridan's onslaught. Stuart remained on horseback, his plume and cape flying, urging his men to hold on and firing his pistol into any Federals who broke through. He made an inviting target, and a Union soldier who had penetrated the Rebel line availed himself of the opportunity, shooting Stuart in the abdomen. Standing at that very spot leads me to reflect about how Stuart's brash showmanship played a central role in his identity, in his style of command, and unfortunately, in his death. It also leads me to ponder the military consequences of Stuart's death.

— **Gordon Rhea**, *historian*

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Looking at leaders who fell as casualties on the battlefield encourages us to think about contingencies and ask important questions: What might have happened (short-term and long-term) had they survived unscathed? How did their loss immediately impact the outcome of the battle? What additional pressure did their loss place on their superiors who now had to name a replacement?

— **Tim Talbott**, *Chief Administrative Officer, CVBT*

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There are many facets of leadership. Those who lead from the front inspire those who follow, but at great risk to themselves. Battlefields allow us to reflect and ask ourselves, "What type of leader would I be?"

— **Tom Van Winkle**, *President, CVBT*

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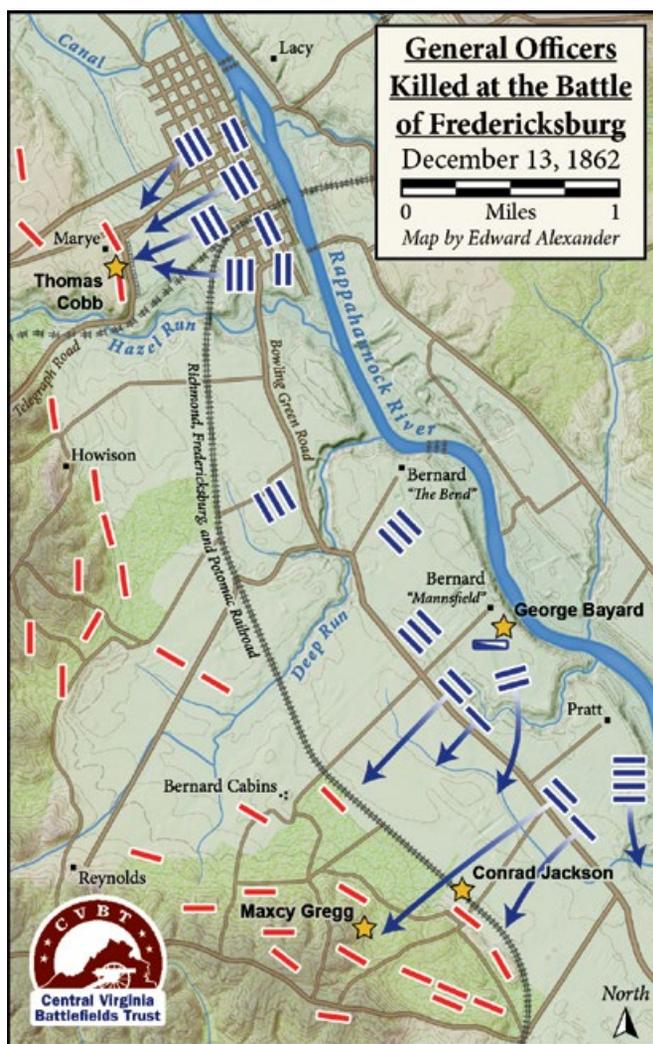
Focusing on the stories of fallen leaders helps us to understand how and where they fell, and how their deaths or woundings impacted the ultimate outcome of the battle. Since one must understand the terrain where these men fell and how that terrain drove the action of the battles, being able to analyze how terrain and events, combined with the circumstances that caused leaders to fall, is essential to any study of battles and actions.

— **Eric Wittenberg**, *historian*

# FREDERICKSBURG'S FOUR Fallen Generals

BY PETER KOLAKOWSKI

Several generals suffered superficial and non-fatal wounds, particularly Maj. Gen. George Meade, during the Battle of Fredericksburg. However, four other generals—two Union and two Confederate—were killed during the battle: George Bayard, Conrad Feger Jackson, Thomas R.R. Cobb, and Maxcy Gregg. Their individual stories are all different, but they share many similarities that brought them to that fateful day of December 13, 1862, in Fredericksburg. Here's a quick look at their untimely deaths and their remembrances.



## BRIG. GEN. GEORGE DASHIELL BAYARD

George Dashiell Bayard was born in Seneca Falls, New York, on December 18, 1835. His family moved to the Iowa Territory, where George spent most of his youth. His family then moved to New Jersey in 1849. From there, he attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1856 as a second lieutenant in the U.S. cavalry. While there, he became friends with future Confederate cavalry officer "Jeb" Stuart.

Bayard started his military career fighting in the Indian Wars in Kansas and Colorado from 1856 to 1861. In Kansas, George was shot in the face with an arrow, which caused considerable pain and required months of convalescence.



The death of Brig. Gen. George Bayard left tantalizing questions about the fate of Union cavalry. NPS

The onset of the Civil War found Bayard teaching cavalry lessons at West Point. Given his desire to suppress the rebellion, Bayard received promotion on August 27, 1861, to colonel of the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry. His unit subsequently saw action at the battle of Dranesville, November 1861, and fighting around Falmouth, Virginia, in early April 1862. He gained a reputation as a strong cavalry commander who

tended to escape combat with only minor wounds. Bayard was subsequently commissioned chief of the III Corps's cavalry and brigadier general of U.S. Volunteers on April 28, 1862.

Bayard subsequently fought at the battle of Port Republic and, later, at the Battle of Cedar Mountain. With his old wound still bothering him, Bayard took a leave of absence in September and consequently missed the battle of Antietam. In November, when Ambrose Burnside replaced George McClellan at the head of the Army of the Potomac, Burnside reorganized the army and promoted Bayard to head the cavalry of the army's new Left Grand Division.



**Maj. Gen. William B. Franklin made his headquarters during the battle of Fredericksburg at Mannsfield, which later burned. George Bayard met his untimely death there during the battle.** *NPS*

At the battle of Fredericksburg, in the early afternoon of December 13, 1862, Bayard met with Maj. Gen. William B. Franklin, Left Grand Division commander, at Franklin's headquarters on the grounds of Mannsfield Plantation. A Confederate artillery shell fragment struck Bayard, mangling his hip and legs—a mortal wound. He lingered until the next day—four days before his 27th birthday. Bayard's body was taken to Philadelphia and then buried in Princeton Cemetery in Princeton, New Jersey, several days before he was to be wed.

"At the time of his death, Bayard was a proven commodity," historian Daniel T. Davis has said. However, Bayard is little remembered today, although several sites are named for him, including Fort Bayard Park in Washington, D.C., and Bayard Street in San Diego, California; and in his hometown, Seneca Falls, New York. Most notable is the small city of Bayard, New Mexico, and the nearby Fort Bayard National Cemetery.

### **BRIG. GEN. CONRAD FEGER JACKSON**

Conrad Feger Jackson was born September 11, 1813, in Alsace Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Isaac Jackson, a Quaker, who died when Conrad was five years old. The boy then went to live with an uncle, Joseph Jackson, in Chester County. He received his education at the local Quaker schools before becoming a conductor on the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. President James K. Polk subsequently appointed him to the revenue service, where, during the Mexican-American War, Jackson carried dispatches for Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott. After returning to Pennsylvania, Jackson commanded the local militia and worked with a petroleum company in the Kanawha Valley area of [West] Virginia. He was there when the Civil War started.

When Virginia seceded, Jackson returned to Pennsylvania, heading to his adopted hometown of Pittsburgh, where he organized what became the 9th Pennsylvania Reserve. Jackson

was appointed a colonel in the unit by Gov. Andrew G. Curtin and served with them throughout the Peninsula Campaign. He received a promotion to brigadier general on July 17, 1862, and had command of the 3rd Brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves at the battles of Second Bull Run and Antietam.

On December 13, 1862, at Fredericksburg, Jackson led his brigade against the right wing of the Confederate army. His brigade was part of the brief Union breakthrough by Meade's division on Prospect Hill, which Confederates eventually repulsed. Unhorsed during the fighting, Jackson had just moved forward to give an order to clear the ground to his front when a Confederate volley hit him in the head, killing him and his aide. Jackson laid on the field before his stripped body



**Brig. Gen. Conrad Jackson's Pittsburgh gravestone says, "He died in a struggle for liberty with his knightly manhood prepared for knightly deeds."** *Library of Congress*

was returned to the Union forces. Meade called Jackson "an officer of merit and reputation, who owed his position to his gallantry and good conduct in previous actions." His body was later taken back to Pittsburgh, where he was buried in the Allegheny Cemetery. He was 49 years old.

Other than annual Grand Army of the Republic and Memorial Day recognitions, Conrad Feger Jackson is little remembered.

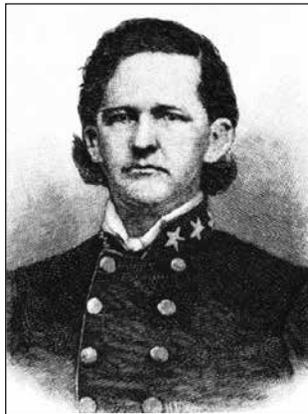


**Brig. Gen. Conrad Jackson made it to railroad tracks near the base of Prospect Hill before he was killed in action.** *Chris Mackowski*

## FALLEN GENERALS

### BRIG. GEN. THOMAS READE ROOTES COBB

Thomas Reade Rootes (T.R.R.) Cobb was born in Jefferson City, Georgia, on April 10, 1823, but as a child his family moved to Athens, Georgia. He was admitted to the bar, having graduated from the University of Georgia first in his class. Cobb served in several positions in Georgia's state government and extensively in its courts system.



Prior to the war, Brig. Gen. Thomas Cobb was best known for his 1858 book *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, which depended on and promoted the myth of the “happy, peaceful, contented and cheerful” slave. *Battles & Leaders*

Congress, and helped write the Confederate constitution.

Soon after war broke out, T.R.R. Cobb rejected further political posts to recruit a military unit in Georgia, which became known as Cobb's Legion. He served in North Carolina and then with the Army of Northern Virginia in the Peninsula and Maryland Campaigns. On December 13, 1862, Cobb commanded his brigade as part of Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws's division along the Stone Wall and Sunken Road at the base of Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg.

Between the Union's first and second waves of attack against this Confederate position, Cobb was standing behind the Stephens House in the sunken road when artillery shrapnel struck him. Cobb's thigh was lacerated and femoral artery severed, mortally wounding him. Carried to a nearby house and given medical aid, Cobb nonetheless bled to death by late afternoon. Ironically, from the spot where

Cobb's older brother, Howell, served as a congressman, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, governor of Georgia, U.S. secretary of the Treasury, and, eventually, a Confederate major general. During the late 1850s, Howell urged loyalty to the Union and compromise on slavery. However, Thomas crusaded for secession. At Georgia's secession convention of 1861, the younger Cobb advocated formation of the Confederacy, was appointed to the Provisional Confederate



A monument along the Sunken Road marks the spot where Brig. Gen. Thomas Cobb was allegedly standing when a Federal cannonball sailed through Martha Stephens's house, once located on the opposite side of the road, and mortally wounded him. *Chris Mackowski*

Cobb fell wounded, he could see the house on Federal Hill where his mother had been born and his parents had wed—a house he himself had visited several times to court his wife.

Cobb was 39 at the time of his death. His body was returned to Georgia and buried in Oconee Hill Cemetery in Athens.

Cobb is remembered several ways. In the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, a monument stands along the now-famous Sunken Road, behind the Stone Wall and near the Stephens House, denoting the area of the mortal wounding. Erected by the Cobb family in 1888, the monument was one of the earliest placed on the Fredericksburg Battlefield.

During the Spanish-American War, along Gunnery Springs in Fredericksburg, a U.S. training camp for the 4th U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment was established from around June 4 until August 18, 1898, and was named Camp Cobb.

In Athens, the restored T.R.R. Cobb House, operated by Watson-Brown Foundation, Inc., opened in 2007 as a historic house museum. Its mission is to preserve and present Cobb's life as a legal scholar, civic leader, slave owner, and military officer, and for understanding 19th-century southern life.

The Cobb Monument, erected in the 1880s, is one of the oldest in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. *NPS*



## BRIG. GEN. MAXCY GREGG

Maxcy Gregg was born in Columbia, South Carolina, on August 1, 1814. He received his schooling in Columbia and attended South Carolina College. He tied for first in his class in 1836, but did not accept the degree because he was unwilling to share the honor. Subsequently, he studied law with his father and passed the bar in 1839.

Gregg, though slightly deaf, was well regarded as an authority in ornithology, botany, and astronomy. He even had his own private observatory.

Gregg strongly advocated for slavery and states rights and became one of the signers of the Secession Manifesto when South Carolina left the Union on December 20, 1860.

He then took command as colonel of the 1st S.C. Infantry, appointed by South Carolina Gov. Francis Wilkinson Pickens, and the unit was in Charleston when state forces fired on Fort Sumter on April 14, 1861. Gregg was promoted to brigadier general on December 14, 1861, and assigned to the Army of Northern Virginia, where he commanded a brigade of South Carolina infantry regiments.

Gregg was recognized for his actions at Second Manassas, where he held off several assaults from Maj. Gen. George Meade. He also helped save the day for the Army of Northern Virginia at the battle of Antietam when, in the afternoon, his brigade helped repulse Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's final assault. However, Gregg also feuded with his corps commander, Lt. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, at several points during the Maryland Campaign.

At the battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862, Gregg's brigade waited in reserve on the southern end of the field, the Confederate right, near Prospect Hill. His old foe, Meade, broke through the Confederate line, but Gregg mistook the attackers for Confederate pickets. By the time he realized he needed to rally his troops, a bullet had entered his spine. He fell from his horse, mortally wounded. Brought to a house in the rear, Gregg, age 48, succumbed to his wound in the early morning of December 15, 1862. Hours prior to his death, Stonewall Jackson visited and told him to be at peace with any troubles.



**Brig. Gen. Maxcy Gregg's brigade fell afoul of their corps commander, Stonewall Jackson, on several occasions during the fall of 1862. By the battle of Fredericksburg, Gregg and Jackson were on the outs. NPS**



**Federal soldiers swarmed up from a swamp in the woods ahead into Brig. Gen. Maxcy Gregg's South Carolinians, posted in this area.**

*Chris Mackowski*

Gregg's body was brought back to Columbia, South Carolina, for a full military funeral and buried on December 20, 1862, exactly two years to the day South Carolina had left the Union. He is buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Columbia, South Carolina.

Maxcy Gregg's most notable remembrance is Stop #5 in the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Two markers explain the story of his wounding. Gregg is also remembered with markers on the Manassas and Antietam Battlefields for his brigade's fighting in those engagements. At Petersburg, Fort Gregg was named by the Confederates in his honor and was one of their last major defensive positions before the fall of that city in 1865. Gregg is additionally highlighted by several historical markers and in museums in Columbia and Charleston for his mark on South Carolina's history.

### **There are many interesting facts and circumstances surrounding the deaths of these four generals:**

- All four were brigade commanders with the rank of brigadier general, three commanding infantry and one cavalry.
- The two Union generals received their initial Civil War commissions from Pennsylvania to lead Keystone volunteer units, and both fought in the small engagement of Dranesville, Virginia.
- Three became casualties on the south end of the battle and one in the Sunken Road.
- Two died on December 13, while two suffered mortal wounds then and died days later.
- The two Confederate generals were prominent fire eaters and promoted succession in their respective states.
- Only one of the four was a West Point graduate, but each had previous military experience.

## The Hays Monument

BY CHRIS MACKOWSKI

"Give 'em hell, boys!" an officer yelled.

George Dunham, like the other men of the 63rd Pennsylvania, fired blindly into the dense undergrowth of the Wilderness. "And we did send them lead for all that was in us," Dunham said, "but the hell seemed to come the other way, for the faster we fired the hotter they poured it into us."

It was May 5, 1864. Dunham's Second Corps brigade had stumbled into an ambush as it marched on to the field near the Brock Road/Plank Road intersection. "It was at this place," Dunham later said, "that [Brig. Gen. Alexander] Hays came riding forward to the line."



Brig. Gen. Alexander Hays was a close friend of both Ulysses S. Grant and Winfield Scott Hancock. NPS



Other battlefields, such as Antietam and Gettysburg, have symbolic traditions involving cannon tubes used as monuments. The Hays Monument in the Wilderness does not adhere to any such conventions. *Jennifer Michael*

The "Fighting Elleck," as he was known, had been the former commander of the 63rd but had since risen to brigade command. Hays had graduated from West Point in 1844; there, he had been good friends with Ulysses S. Grant, now general in chief of the army and Hays's superior. Hays had served with distinction during the entire war, earning battlefield promotions and sustaining a grievous leg wound at Second Bull Run. His men considered him "brave as a lion."

As Dunham remembered it, Hays "seemed to be in the act of raising his sword [when] he was struck in the head by a minie ball. He clung to the rein of his horse and the horse reared on his hind feet and turned his head to the rear, when the general fell to the ground." Hays was, Dunham believed, "in the act of ordering a charge."

The moment, though, has become loaded with myth. Did Hays die a hero's death or suffer a foolish accident? "Our ... commander Aleck Hays never goes into a battle unless he is nearly dead drunk," remembered Charles Pollard of the 13th Connecticut, who believed on that fatal day that



Union and Confederates gathered for the 1905 dedication of the Hays Monument. NPS

Hays “was so drunk he could hardly ride his horse.” In that same vein, as another story goes, Hays arrived on the scene and decided to take a nip on his canteen, which had become entangled in his reins. As he leaned forward to take a swig, Hays caught the bullet.

Drunk or sober, as the mortally wounded Hays fell to the ground, men jumped to his aid. Someone found a blanket, and they bundled him into it. Four men and an officer hustled him from the front even as the battle continued to rage. Just behind the lines, a member of 1st United States Sharpshooters stole a glance. “We looked into the blanket + saw him with blood streaming from a hole in his right temple with only an occasional long drawn sigh to show there was any life ...” the sharpshooter recalled.

Grant mourned his friend, calling him “a most gallant officer.” “With him it was ‘Come, boys,’ not ‘Go.’”

In June of 1905, veterans of the 65th Pennsylvania returned to the Wilderness to dedicate

a monument to Hays. Hundreds of former soldiers, North and South, gathered for the event, led by Hays’s son, Gilbert. Hays’s one-time aide, Capt. David Shields, offered remarks and laid an ivy wreath at the monument’s base. Local dignitary Judge John T. Goolrick also offered comments, vowing that local residents, especially Confederate veterans and their sons, would protect the new monument and decorate it every Memorial Day. Stewardship was very much on their minds.

The monument—a 42-pounder banded rifled cannon that stands nearly 10 feet tall and weighs seven and a half tons—stands along Brock Road 1,300 feet north of its intersection with Plank Road. The location of Hays’s death was actually some distance to the west, though, in what is today a housing development. The fence around the monument was added shortly thereafter, and the monument is one of only two on the local battlefields that still retains its original fence.



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