

# THE SHARPSHOOTER

THE CIVIL WAR FORUM OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK

October 2009



**Cost:**

Members: \$40  
Non-Members: \$50

**Date:**

October 21, 2009

**Place:**

The Roger Smith Hotel,  
507 Lexington Ave.,  
2nd floor

**Time:**

Dinner at 6 PM,  
Doors open 5:30 PM  
Cash Bar 5:30–6 PM

Please call 212-534-0149  
by October 17th  
to confirm you will be attending.

## Triple Header!!!

October's meeting will feature three speakers, each with a different special area of interest in Civil War history.

**Carmen G. Delgado** is a New York City native, a Latina, and a long-time political activist. Currently pursuing a BA in Sociology/Anthropology with a minor in history, she is formerly a member of "Dos Pueblos," a Nicaraguan, non-governmental organization. Carmen got hooked on the Civil War after watching the Ken Burns documentary and has been a member of the Round Table since 2004. She will speak about Walt Whitman: The Civil War & Poetry.

**Nancy Newcomb** worked as a fundraiser, first for Harvard Medical School and later for Smith College, her alma mater. Having graduated from Smith in 1954 with a degree in modern European history, Nancy will speak about the books that sparked her interest in the Civil War and especially in visiting Civil War burial sites. First among these was *The Children of Pride* series by Robert Manson Myers.

**Allen Walberg** is a veteran of the Vietnam War, having served with the 3rd Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division, then in the 101st Airborne Division in 1969, including the A Shau Valley campaigns and the battle of Hamburger Hill. Since his grandfather only arrived in America from Poland in 1913, he had no direct relatives who fought in the Civil War, but his military service spurred his interest in the conflict. Allen retired in 1999 after 27 years with the Dept. of Veteran's Affairs and is currently the treasurer of the non-profit New York Military Affairs Symposium.



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the first edition of *The Sharpshooter*, the quarterly publication of The Civil War Forum of Metropolitan New York.

We started the Forum with just a few guiding principles: a social club for people with a love of history and a particular interest in the Civil War; an educational club where people should expect to learn something new and interesting about the Civil War from attending any one of our events; a member-driven club where the ideas of members are solicited, respected, and acted upon; and finally, simply put, a club that provides member-sponsored events that are fun, educational, social experiences for all the participants.

I suspected that acting on these principles would enable the club to better benefit from the energy, enthusiasm, experience, and knowledge of our members. Patting myself and the others who had this dream on the back, boy, were we right! We have become a participatory club way beyond what any of us expected. People arrive early, seem to be having a fun and informative time, and they invite their friends! Using a restaurant as our meeting place has turned out to be a wonderful decision, as it enhances our aura of a social gathering. Best of all was our start, using members as presenters! We do, indeed, have the people power throughout our membership. I hope that every member will continue to think of new ways that we can draw on the strength of the vast knowledge and life experience of our members!

We are new. We have a clean slate and no fixed way of doing anything. If you see a way to improve our club, please let me know at DavidMKinard@aol.com.

Regards,  
David Kinard

### TRIP NEWS:

Time to reserve your seat(s) on the bus for the first trip of CWFNY: a full-day visit to Philadelphia on Sat., Oct. 17, 2009, including Laurel Hill Cemetery (resting place of Generals Meade and Pemberton); The Union League Club (see important dress note below!); the Grand Army of the Republic Museum, and other local historic sites. Guide for the trip will be Andy Waskie, noted Philadelphia and Civil War historian, who portrays General George Meade in Civil War re-enactments and other historic events.

The cost is \$125 per person, including bus transportation, all admissions, and a luncheon. Since the trip date is rapidly approaching, please make your reservation as soon as possible. Make your check payable to The Civil War Forum of New York and mail it to: Howard Rosenthal, 81-15 Surrey Place, Jamaica, NY 11432.

*Dress Note:* The Union League Club requires business casual attire. For men: slacks and a shirt with a collar. No jeans, T-shirts, or sneakers. Equivalent attire is required for women. Since we will be walking through Laurel Hill Cemetery, you may want to bring more comfortable walking shoes which you can leave on the bus during the Union League Club visit. **We will leave from The 67th St. Armory on Park Ave. promptly at 7:30 A.M. Call cell phone no. 917-881-1574 if you have a problem on the day.**



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Nathan Burkan, Jr.

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Charles K. Schwarz

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Nathan Burkan, Jr.

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# The Bayonet Ring, Or “Always Properly Fix Bayonets”

Submitted by Dan Morrison

*Excerpt from “I Never Saw My Beans of Tent Again,”  
by William Henry Clark, Battle of Seven Pines, Virginia — 26  
May, 1862*

Note: First seen as a standard design by the French, M1763, the locking ring offered a significant benefit to the soldier by ensuring the bayonet would stay on the barrel during attack. While there were still many ring less bayonets with “T” and “L” stud guides used in the Civil War, along with the smoothbore muskets, most soldiers eventually were equipped with socket bayonets that had locking rings, such as the Enfield and Springfield rifles. Other bayonet types, such as saber, Bahn Frei, and double barrel shotguns, were secured by snap springs.

“The regiment to our front broke and came back through our ranks, confusing us a good deal, but we dressed up again and were ordered to commence firing. I fired once and, looking over my shoulder, saw Phil Bixby, who stood behind me in the rear rank, lying on the ground with his face upturned, and covered with blood. I reloaded my gun, and resting it against a little fruit tree, sighted at a man standing between two bushes. The bayonet ring was turned so it hid my front sight. I replaced it and fired; the man left that place.”

— Source: Civil War Times, February 2003, p. 20

*In a letter by Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams (Commanding First Division, Twelfth Army Corps, Army of The Potomac) to his daughter—May 18, 1863*

“Reaching (retreating to) Chancellors House, I formed line behind some rifle pits made by the Rebels... facing down the Plank Road toward Germanna (west). Here I was ordered by a staff officer of General Hooker to hold this place at all hazards, who to my protestation that I had no ammunition, replied with immense pom-

posity, ‘Use the bayonet!’ As we were suffering hugely from artillery shells thrown from a half mile distance, I didn’t exactly see how my bayonets were to be effective.”

## FREDERICKSBURG: THE AFTERMATH

The Union losses of 12,653 at Fredericksburg were extremely heavy, considering that the brunt of the fighting was borne by only five divisions out of an army of more than 116,000 men.

Most of the Federal dead lay in front of the Sunken Road beneath Marye’s Heights — a testimony to the bravery, and futility, of the Union assaults made upon that position. Confederate casualties were relatively light, with a total of 5,377 out of an army of about 78,000 men.

After his attempt to redeem himself had failed in the farcical “Mud March,” Major General Ambrose Burnside lost the confidence of President Lincoln. Consequently, in early 1863, Burnside was replaced as commander of the Army of the Potomac by his subordinate and bitter rival Major General “Fighting Joe” Hooker.

## TOUR NEWS:

The first tour by the CWFNY will be May 13–16, 2010 (Thurs.–Sun.), a bus tour to the Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg areas, including Guiney’s Station. Tour guide will be Frank O’Reilly. It will be similar to the Round Table trip 13 years ago. \$100 deposits are being accepted by Howard, with checks payable to The Civil War Forum of New York. Look for more information coming in the near future.

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## DUES:

Membership for July 1, 2009–June 30, 2010: \$50.00

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## THE LIBRARY

by Nathan Burkan

*Tried By War, Abraham Lincoln As Commander in Chief*, by James M. McPherson

This highly readable book should be required reading for every person interested in the Civil War. It is a study of Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief. The theme is Lincoln's mastery of the interrelationship of political goals with military strategy.

Lincoln out of necessity was the most "hands-on" war President in our history, initially because of the failure of leadership of The Army of the Potomac. This army became the graveyard of military careers, going through general after general until the appointment of Ulysses S. Grant as military Commander-in-Chief of all Union armies in the Spring of 1864.

Lincoln assiduously studied the various treaties on war and became an excellent strategist who surprised many generals with his military knowledge. This

enabled him to analyze the performance of Union generals and to review various war plans. For example, he quickly realized that the destruction of Lee's army was the goal, not the seizure of Richmond.



McPherson illustrates Lincoln's military and political adroitness in ensuring the maintenance of the neutrality of Kentucky, a key border state, by reversing, in August 1861, General John C. Fremont's unauthorized proclamation of emancipating the slaves in his military district. Lincoln was concerned that emancipation would have resulted in Kentucky joining the Confederacy. His decision paid off. Kentucky ultimately joined the Union.

McPherson cites other examples. Circumstances had changed, and the success at Antietam enabled Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which made it politically impossible for England and France to recognize the Confederacy.



THE  
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