



# THE OFFICIAL RECORDS



OF THE ROBERT E. LEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF CENTRAL NJ

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## FEBRUARY 1, 2010 MEETING

*Woodbridge Public Library, 7 pm*

### *General Edward Porter Alexander*

*Speaker: Jay Jorgensen*

Edward Porter Alexander's story is a story of a man who received an excellent education at the United States Military Academy at West Point, who served his country well in a number of varied positions, and who followed the call of his native state of Georgia in order to serve the Confederate States of America. He served brilliantly in the Army of Northern Virginia, ultimately attaining the rank of brigadier-general. Alexander's story is also one of man who used his talents to their utmost, and constantly strove to do his best.

Fortunately for historians E.P. Alexander left two important contributions to Civil War scholarship. His *Military Memoirs of a Confederate* is a solid history of the Army of Northern Virginia as seen through the eyes of one of its premier officers. Published in 1907, it has been an excellent source of research ever since.

More importantly, his unpublished memoirs edited by Gary Gallagher and published as *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander* in 1989, are simply a treasure trove to readers for understanding the Civil War from the

perspective of an astute participant with a wonderful writing style. Professor Gallagher characterizes the book at page xv of his Introduction:

*It is utterly candid, filled with memorable descriptions of people and events, and blessed with ample portions of analysis, humor, and sheer drama.*

"If there is a better unpublished source on Confederate affairs in the Virginia theater," a leading historian of Lee's army (Robert K. Krick) wrote of the manuscript, "I surely don't know of it, and can't wait to see it."

What riches may yet surface cannot be predicted with any certainty, but in the last half-century only the reminiscences of Henry Kyd Douglas and the journal of Jedediah Hotchkiss have approached the quality of *Fighting for the Confederacy*. This month's presentation on Alexander will provide an overview of his life.

Our speaker is Jay Jorgensen. He is the founder and president of the Robert E. Lee Civil War Round Table. Jay has had 4 books published on Civil War topics, and is a frequent speaker on the Civil War Round Table circuit. He is a Superior Court Judge, currently sitting in the Family Division in Middlesex County.

## NEWS AND NOTES

\* Our thanks go out to fellow member Phil Kohn for his terrific presentation at the January meeting on "Confederate New Mexico and Arizona Campaign: Sibley's Missions to Mexico". We look forward to the third of his presentations on the West next year!



*Colonel William Steele (a.k.a. Phil Kohn) explores Confederate diplomatic overtures to Mexico*

\* This month's regular book raffle book is an autographed copy of Imboden's Brigade in the Gettysburg Campaign by Steve French. This was the recipient of our 2008 Bachelder-Coddington Award. The preservation raffle is a complete set of Ken Burns' epic series The Civil War. Last month's book raffle winners were Mike Luongo and Chris McAvoy.

\* Speaking of raffles, our Round Table is engaged in a special fundraiser. The prize is an authentic signed limited edition framed print on museum-quality canvas created from an original 18"X 24" pastel and charcoal printing by Civil War artist extraordinaire (and R.E. Lee CWRT member!) Deborah Olson. The print will be raffled off at the March meeting. The print will be available during the February meeting. All are encouraged to participate in this terrific fundraiser! Please see Tom Rizzo at the meeting for tickets and details.

\* If any member is looking to help with the Round Table in any capacity, please see one of the Board of Advisers members at any meeting. Volunteers are always welcome! Help keep the R.E. Lee CWRT vibrant by pitching in!

# Gettysburg Vignettes

*by Jay Jorgensen*

### Sticking with the Men

Dan Sickles had made the bold move to place his entire Corps in an advanced position near the Emmitsburg Road on July 2, 1863. As it quickly turned out, it was the wrong move. Confederate brigades soon tore into the Federal lines, crumbling the Union presence in the area.

The New York general attempted to rally his troops. He sent aides to seek additional support. He also maintained his headquarters in the middle of his line so that his subordinate officers could find him easily. As the fate of his Corps worsened, he tried his best to encourage his men. Through it all he did not ever consider removing himself to safety, which some commanders did.

As Sickles was riding his horse near the Abraham Trostle barn he suffered a severe wound. A solid shot slammed into him just above the right knee. He had the presence of mind to dismount, but was losing a lot of blood. A stretcher bearer in the area applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. Sickles remained conscious while waiting for an ambulance, his thoughts with his men.

Once the ambulance arrived he wanted to make sure his men kept up their spirits. He asked the stretcher bearer to give him a cigar. As he was slowly taken from the field he propped himself up on the stretcher so the men could see he was still alive. Waving the lit cigar toward them, he encouraged his men to fight on. Only after he had done that did he allow himself to be taken to a hospital where he had his right leg amputated just above the knee.

He made sure the leg was preserved, and kept it as a souvenir. You can view the bones today at the Walter Reed Army Hospital Museum in Washington, D.C.

*This vignette is excerpted from Gettysburg's Leadership Lessons by Jay Jorgensen.*

### ***This Month in the Civil War: 1862***

**2/6/62:** Surrender of Ft. Henry, Tennessee

**2/8/62:** Battle of Roanoke Island, North Carolina

**2/16/62:** Surrender of Ft. Donelson, Tennessee

**2/22/62:** Inauguration of President Jefferson Davis

**2/25/62:** Federal troops move into Nashville

## **Who Am I?**

I was the son of a French émigré dancing master and a Richmond, Virginia housewife with whom he had eloped, and was born in Savannah, Georgia on January 21, 1813. I have been characterized by one of my biographers as “precocious, handsome, and daring”; I was also mercurial, headstrong, and unstable. All of these traits contributed to a career which soared in early life, stalled during the civil War, and ended in utter frustration during the postbellum years.

I attended Charleston College in South Carolina from 1829 until 1831 (when I was expelled) under the auspices of a prominent lawyer of the city. I was soon appointed a teacher of mathematics aboard the sloop of war Natchez at the instigation of J. R. Poinsett, Andrew Jackson's principal South Carolina lieutenant. In 1838, I received an appointment in the army topographical engineers and transferred to land.

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln appointed me major general in the Regular Army, and assigned me to the command of the ill-defined Department of the West. From then until my resignation from the service on June 4, 1864, I was a controversial

administrator and was shunted from command to command. After a failure in the Valley campaign of the spring of 1862, I was relieved from command at my own request after being assigned to a command under General John Pope, whom I detested.

In 1864, I was nominated for the presidency by a coalition of radicals, Missouri Germans, and war democrats. The supporters of Lincoln, embarrassed by my candidacy, effected a bargain by which I withdrew in return for the ousting of the conservative Montgomery Blair from the Cabinet.

While temporarily residing in New York City I died on July 13, 1890, and am buried in Rockland Cemetery, Piermont-on-the-Hudson, New York. Who am I?

*—submitted, along with the Trivia Quiz, by John DiNuzzo*

## **CIVIL WAR QUIZ**

1. What communication prompted Lincoln to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation when he did?
2. What notable C. S. A. strategist typically refused to inform top aides about forthcoming movements?
3. Though fought virtually to a draw, what battle did Confederates list as Robert E. Lee's first victory?
4. What Union regiment suffered the largest percentage of one-battle casualties?
5. What C. S. A. position was attacked by Union forces in March 1865, with Abraham Lincoln watching the action?

*The Official Records* is the monthly newsletter of the  
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