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# The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

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## The *RUNNER*

### Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Editor **Bob Cooke**

May 2010

**Our next meeting will be Thursday, 9 September 2010 at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound (Airlie Rd.) Social Hour at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:30 p.m.**



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We hope you are enjoying the warm days of summer (although it has been quite hot these last few days!) The RT is on a summer break but your committee will be meeting shortly to select our programs for the coming season.

**Mr. William "Bill" Jayne** spoke to our group in May on the establishment of the national cemetery system. Beginning with the burials of soldiers who died on frontier posts such as Forts Leavenworth and Gibson, he noted that there was no formalized system to deal with those killed in the service of their country. During the Mexican-American War, General Scott did attempt to take care of his dead, but still, there was no governmental policy to follow. Mr. Jayne noted that to this day, there are Americans buried in cemeteries in Mexico City.

With the onset of the Civil War and the massive casualties that followed in the wake of a battle, something had to be done. Over 620,000 soldiers lost their lives during that conflict and at one battle alone (Shiloh) there were 27,000 casualties. As he stated, "The Civil War changed the relationship between the government and the people." In July 1862, the U.S. Congress authorized the purchase of grounds for cemetery use. Fourteen cemeteries were established, including ones at Philadelphia, Keokuk (Iowa) and Springfield (Illinois).

Here in Wilmington, after the battles at Fort Fisher and the occupation of the town, there were at least 4,500 dead, scattered throughout the area. Some were interred at Fort Fisher, others at the town's Oakdale Cemetery, more found their final resting place in unmarked graves near where they fell. An effort to gather and identify the dead began in earnest in 1865 and shortly thereafter land was purchased for the new National Cemetery at Wilmington, N.C. Many of the newly established national

cemeteries were located on battlefields or prison camps and by 1870, there were seventy cemeteries holding nearly 300,000 soldier's graves. Of that number, nearly half (144,000) were unknowns.

The Wilmington National Cemetery was bought early in 1867 from Isaac D. Ryttenburg for \$2,000. Burials began almost immediately; graves were sodded, wooden crosses placed and a caretaker's lodge was built. Of the 2,059 soldiers buried there, 604 were known to be white, over 1,200 are unknowns, 12 sailors, seventy-one known blacks and 138 unknown black soldiers lie at rest within the five acre compound. At least 72 of those men are known to have been in the infamous Andersonville prison. There are no (known) Confederate dead in the cemetery; the national cemeteries were only to hold Union dead, not Confederates. Immediately after the war, those men would have to be cared for by their relatives; this policy has since changed.

Mr. Jayne then went on to give a history of the cemetery (in 1881, 50 bodies were removed from Fort Fisher to Wilmington, in 1882, 2 African-American soldiers came from Burgaw). In the 1930s, the national cemetery system was expanded due to the aging WWI veterans and many new cemeteries were added: Fort Snelling (Minnesota), Long Island (N.Y.), Baltimore, Fts, Bliss, Sam Houston, Rosecrans and at the Golden Gate. After WWII, another expansion was required due to the many dead returning to their native soil. Bringing us up to date, Bill told us that the largest veteran areas in the country have been identified and expansion of those cemeteries begun. In these regions- Chicago, Northern California, South Florida, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Dallas, Seattle, Albany (N.Y.) and Oklahoma City the Veteran's Administration will adhere to the mission of the National Cemetery Administration: "To honor veterans with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service to our nation."

### **This just in!**

"Statshot: Numbers that shaped the era.

Within a year of passage of the National Cemetery Act of 1862, 14 cemeteries were established for Union soldiers. By 1870, there were 73 burial grounds. Virginia is home to the most Civil War era national cemeteries, with 14- including Arlington national Cemetery, the resting place of 16,000 Union and 482 Confederate soldiers. The smallest national cemetery established before the war's end was Ball's Bluff, in Leesburg, Va., the final resting place of 54 soldiers. Vicksburg National Cemetery is the largest established during the war; it holds 17,077 Union soldiers, 12,909 of whom are unidentified, and 2 Confederate soldiers. [Civil War Times, June 2010].

### **Raffle Winners**

*More Civil War Curiosities-* **Ed Mahony**

*Glory Road-* **Rich Triebe**

*Murder Most Confederate-* **Tim Barton**

*Cold Mountain-* **Dick Covell**

*Phantom Army of the Civil War-* **John Bolger**

*The Battles of East Cavalry Field-* **Ed Gibson**

And the Grand Prize Winner of *Arms Maker to the Confederacy:* **Gary Henderson!**



Kudos and congratulations to member **Tim Winstead** who was honored for his masterful study of Captain John Newland Maffitt by none other than **Representative Mike McIntyre**. Rep. McIntyre, prompted by member **Bob Maffitt** (a descendant of the intrepid mariner), read of Tim's work and had it inserted into the Congressional Record. Once again, congratulations Tim and keep up the good work!



The steering committee held its first meet of the summer and has come up with a slate of speakers to astound and hold our members in awe! This is of course, a tentative list subject at this early date to change; bear in mind we still have to contact and schedule speakers, but here is a taste of what is in store: At our kick-off meeting on 9 September - **Jeff Bockert**(subject to be determined, Jeff is a subject expert on virtually any area); In March, **Robert (Bert) Dunkerly** will speak on the "Revolutionary War Connections to the Civil War". Those two speakers have been confirmed, others remain to be scheduled. Remember, if you come across a historian, tour guide, author, etc. that you feel is exceptional, obtain their contact information and pass it along to a committee member.

Once again, have a happy and healthy summer and we'll see you in **September!**

