

THE CHARGER

December, 2008

455th Meeting

Vol. 30 #4

Tonight's Program:

Restoring the USS *Monitor*

For more than a century, the *Monitor's* resting place in the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" remained a mystery, despite numerous searches. Finally, in 1973, a team of scientists led by John G. Newton of the Duke University Marine Laboratory located the *Monitor* while testing geological survey equipment.

On August 27, 1973, after identifying twenty-one possible contacts, side-searching sonar found a long, amorphous echo. The first pass of the television camera revealed iron plates; a virtually flat, unobstructed surface (the bottom of the hull); a thick waist (the armor belt); and a circular structure (the turret). With each successive series of camera passes, evidence mounted that the wreck was that of the *Monitor*, but it would take an intensive study of the visual evidence over the next five months to confirm it.

A second visit to the site in April 1974 positively identified the *Monitor*, lying in approximately 230 feet of water about 16 miles south-southeast of Cape Hatteras.



USS *Monitor* sinking

Tonight's Speaker:

Dr. Sean Brossia

Dr. Sean Brossia is the Director of Research for C.C. Technologies Laboratories, Inc., the company selected to save the metal artifacts from the *USS Monitor*. Dr. Brossia has over thirteen years experience in investigating the corrosion behavior of iron and other metals in both aqueous and non-aqueous systems. He has co-authored nearly fifty technical publications and has filed six patent applications. He holds a Master's Degree and Ph.D in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of Virginia.

**Date: Wednesday,
December 12, 2008**

**Place: Judson Manor NEW!
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio**

**Time: Drinks 6 PM
Dinner 7 PM**

**Reservations: Please Call NEW!
Dan Zeiser (440) 449-9311
Or email ccwrt1956@yahoo.com
By 6 pm Tuesday before meeting**

**Meal choice: Buffet includes
entre, vegetable, potato/rice,
salad, and dessert**

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

FOUNDED 1957

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Vice President: **Dennis Keating** (216) 397-0188
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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

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1985 Brian Kowell	1959 John Cullen, Jr.
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1983 William Victory	1957 Kenneth Grant

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER, 2008

Happy holidays to all,

Happy holidays! How easily we pass this greeting along to one another, with our best wishes for peace on earth. Would Civil War soldiers have felt the same sentiments as the holidays drew near? I imagine so, although their "happy holidays" wishes were no doubt tempered by the harsh realities of brutal war. Still, a Civil War holiday edition of Harper's Weekly once featured a cover page depicting Santa Clause distributing gifts to eager and grateful Union soldiers. And then there's the oft told story of Union and Confederate bands at Stones River serenading both sides with songs of the season, a sort of 1862 battle of the bands. Also, I recall reading a tale of a young Confederate tenor singing Christmas carols on a cold, still, winter night, with soldiers of both sides listening in rapture and tears.

Consider these excerpts from a Christmas time letter written by a Union private to his wife back in Ohio: *I received your more than welcome letter with great pleasure, but if I was pleased to receive the letter it was nothing to be compared to the pleasure I experienced upon reading it...O my dear wife you cannot imagine the pleasure that your likeness would give me... Dear, there is not an hour in the day that I do not think of you and when I received your letter tonight so full of hope and encouragement I felt as though I was suddenly transferred from this miserable country to "God's country" as the boys call home...My dear, if I was with you tonight, wouldn't I give you a good old-fashioned squeeze. I never realized how dear you were to me until I came to this God forsaken country. But I hope it will do me good. I will be better prepared to enjoy the blessings of a peaceful home and a loving wife that I would have had I never seen hardship.*

Soldiers at Christmas time...far from home and loved ones.... lonely. Blessings to them all.

Again, happy holidays. Won't you join us, one and all, at our next meeting on December 10th?

Respectfully,
Jon Thompson

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2008/2009 SCHEDULE**

September 10, 2008

**Varina Davis:
First Lady of the
Confederacy**

Dr. Joan Cashin



October 8, 2008



**The Supreme Court
During the
Civil War**

Chris Fortunato

November 12, 2008

**Blood, Tears, and Glory:
How Ohioans Won the
Civil War**

Dr. James Bissland

December 10, 2008

**Restoring
the
USS
Monitor**



Dr. Sean Brossia

January 14, 2009

**The Dick Crews Annual
Debate**

*The Hitherto Unknown Meeting
Of Abraham Lincoln and
Jefferson Davis at Hampton Roads in January, 1865
Lincoln will be portrayed by Mel Maurer
Jefferson Davis will be portrayed by John C. Fazio*

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey

February 11, 2009

**The Great
Emancipator
As Lawyer
Dr. Paul Finkelman**



March 11, 2009

**Meet Me at the Fair: The Northern
Ohio Sanitary Fair of the Cleveland
Chapter of the United States Sani-
tary Commission
Tim Daley**

April 8, 2009

**The Fight for Money:
The Income Tax Laws
Of the Civil War**

Donald Korb

May 13, 2009

The Fighting McCooks



**Barbara
Whalen**

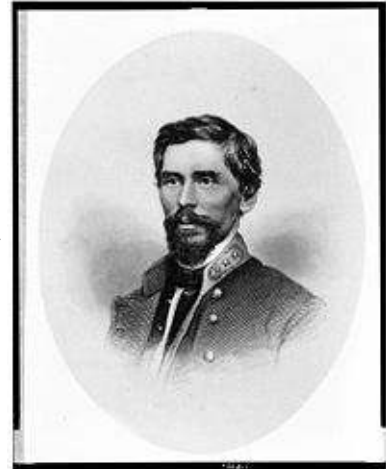
The Irish in the Civil War

By Dennis Keating

This is the final installment of the three part series.

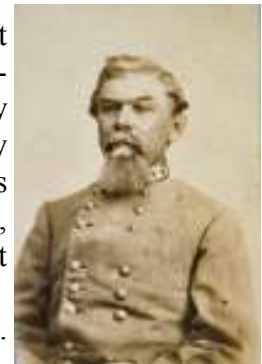
Patrick Cleburne

Patrick Cleburne was called the “Stonewall of the West” by Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Robert E. Lee called Cleburne like “a meteor shining from a clouded sky.” Like Meagher and so many other Civil War soldiers, Cleburne was Irish-born. Unlike many other Irish-Americans, however, Cleburne was neither poor nor Catholic. He was born in 1828 and grew up near Cork as a member of the Protestant gentry. His father was a doctor. Unfortunately, his mother died at thirty-seven when he was only one, leaving his father a widower with four children. Then, his father died at fifty-one when Patrick was only fifteen, leaving him an orphan. Six years later, without notifying his stepmother, Cleburne enlisted in the British army, but served only three years before departing Ireland for America. Having failed to pass exams to become a pharmacist in Ireland, he made his way to Cincinnati, where he clerked in a drugstore. He quickly moved on to Helena, Arkansas to work in a drugstore, of which he later became an owner. After selling it, he became a lawyer. He worked with fellow lawyer and future Civil War comrade Thomas Hindman to combat the Know-Nothing party’s campaign against Irish immigrants. As the 1860 election loomed, Cleburne helped to organize a militia company (the “Yell Rifles”) in Helena.



Patrick Cleburne

After Arkansas voted to secede from the Union, the Yell Rifles became part of the 1st Arkansas Volunteer Infantry. Cleburne got off to a rocky start, deposing his state commander for incompetence, leading to a charge of mutiny against Cleburne. However, his scheduled court martial was dismissed by Gideon Pillow, commander of the new Army of Tennessee. Cleburne and his troops then voted to join the Confederate army under General William Hardee, who became Cleburne’s friend and patron. Cleburne would serve as best man at Hardee’s wedding and Hardee would offer the eulogy at Cleburne’s burial.



William J. Hardee

Cleburne and his Arkansas troops were first bloodied at Shiloh in April, 1862. Cleburne had become a brigade commander in Hardee’s division of Albert Sidney Johnston’s Army of Tennessee. Cleburne’s brigade attacked Ohio regiments in Sherman’s division, driving them back on the first day of the battle. Cleburne and Sherman would meet again in Tennessee and Georgia. The second day Cleburne’s command was devastated as U.S. Grant’s reinforced army drove the Confederates under Beauregard from the field. Cleburne’s 2,700 man brigade suffered over 1,000 killed, wounded and missing. The commander of his former regiment and the captain of the Yell Rifles were both killed in this murderous battle.

Following the Confederate retreat from Corinth, Cleburne and his brigade participated in the invasion of Kentucky by Braxton Bragg and Kirby Smith later in 1862. On August 27, while inquiring about the wounding of his friend Lucius Polk from the Yell Rifles (and nephew of bishop-general Leonidas Polk of the Army of Tennessee), Cleburne was wounded himself (although only slightly) at the defeat of Don Carlos Buell’s forces at Richmond. Then, on October 8 at Perryville, Cleburne was again wounded, hit by an artillery shell. Nevertheless, his troops distinguished themselves against a much larger Federal force, which included Phil Sheridan.

After Bragg's retreat to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Cleburne was promoted to major general and command of a division under Hardee. Cleburne played a prominent role in the battle of Stones River. His division spearheaded the surprise attack by Hardee against Alexander McCook's corps of William Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland on the morning of December 31. Initially successful, they eventually ran up against the diehard resistance of troops, including Sheridan's. In the wake of Bragg's retreat after his repulse on January 2, 1863, Cleburne was caught up in the conflict among the officers of the army who were asked by Bragg for a vote of confidence. Along with Hardee and others, Cleburne responded that a new commander of the Army of Tennessee was needed. However, Jefferson Davis, supported by Joseph Johnston, refused to remove Bragg. Thereafter, Bragg held this against Hardee and Cleburne. Nevertheless, the fighting quality of Cleburne and his division were recognized.

This proved true in September at Chickamauga. Cleburne fought hard on the Confederate right under Polk, going up against George Thomas. Of his 5,000 man division, one-third were killed or wounded in the fierce fighting. After the battle, Bragg accused Polk, his worst critic in the army, and D.H. Hill for failures to attack effectively. A visit from Davis again failed to solve this continuing conflict. As the Army of Tennessee conducted a siege of Rosecrans's army in Chattanooga, Bragg remained in command.

With Rosecrans's removal by Lincoln, the appointment of Thomas, and the arrival of Grant and Sherman to lift the siege, the situation was about to change. Bragg rid himself of Longstreet, sending him off at his request to attack Burnside in Knoxville. Beginning with Hooker's successful attack on Lookout Mountain on November 24, the Army of the Cumberland was about to redeem itself for its defeat in September. On November 25, Sheridan would lead the unordered charge up Missionary Ridge that would result in the rout of Bragg's army. However, Grant's plan of attack was for Sherman to deliver the main blow. Sherman attacked the north end of Missionary Ridge. Defending against Sherman at the Chattanooga and Cleveland Railroad tunnel was Cleburne's division. Outnumbered four to one, Cleburne's force beat back several attacks that day by Sherman's 30,000 strong army. With the collapse of Bragg's center and left, Cleburne's embattled division served as the rear guard of the retreating army. He and his heavily outnumbered troops prevented further disaster and saved the army's wagon train by holding off the pursuing Federals at Ringgold Gap.

While in winter camp and after Bragg's replacement finally by Johnston, Cleburne came to the most controversial decision of his military career. On January 2, 1864, before the assembled (fractious) high command of the Army of Tennessee, the naïve Cleburne read his proposal to overcome the North's numerical military superiority (including its Negro regiments) by arming slaves with a guarantee of freedom for fighting for the South. Cleburne argued that Southern independence was more important than the preservation of slavery. For this, he was denounced by many of his fellow officers, some of whom considered this to be treason. Despite being sworn to secrecy by Johnston, Cleburne's proposal was leaked by a fellow officer to Davis, who suppressed it for fear that it would destroy his government. This setback was offset by Cleburne's pursuit and engagement with Sue Tarleton, the maid of honor at Hardee's wedding in Mobile later that January.

That spring and summer found Cleburne and his troops playing an important role in Johnston (and then Hood)'s attempt to prevent Sherman's much larger army from capturing Atlanta. At the end of May, Cleburne is credited with saving the army's right wing from destruction at Pickett's Mill. On June 27, Cleburne's entrenched division again stopped an assault by Sherman. Versus 8,000 attackers who lost 800 killed and wounded at the battle of Kennesaw



John Bell Hood



William Rosecrans



George H. Thomas



Leonidas Polk



Braxton Bragg

Mountain, Cleburne's losses were only 2 killed and 9 wounded.

Davis's choice of Hood over Hardee to re-

place Johnston, as Sherman approached Atlanta after repeatedly flanking Johnston, was very disappointing to Cleburne, as was no doubt Hood passing over him in appointing Frank Cheatham to command Hood's corps. Cleburne and his division were in the thick of the fighting triggered by Hood's offensive attacks on Sherman from July through September in his defense of Atlanta. On July 22 at Bald Hill, Cleburne's troops killed Ohioan James Birdseye McPherson, the only Union army commander killed in battle. On August 31 and September 1, in his only opportunity to command a corps (Hardee's), Cleburne failed to defeat the Federals under Thomas and Logan at Jonesboro. Hood blamed Hardee for this defeat. The next day Hood evacuated Atlanta, sealing Lincoln's victory in the fall election.

Cleburne, his troops, and their comrades were dispirited by these defeats and Sherman's capture of Atlanta. They blamed Hood, who nevertheless remained in command. He failed to prevent Sherman from mounting his March to the Sea. Hood then began his doomed campaign to invade Tennessee and capture Nashville. Instead, he would largely destroy what remained of the Army of Tennessee, the finale being George Thomas' victory at Nashville in December.

Cleburne nevertheless did his duty. However, he once again was caught up in one of the many setbacks of the Army of Tennessee. On November 29 at Spring Hill, Tennessee, due to confusing orders, Frank Cheatham's corps, including Cleburne's division, allowed John Schofield's fleeing Federals to retreat that night almost directly through the sleeping Confederates, whom Hood had ordered to block their retreat. The next day, a furious Hood denounced his generals and then ordered a hurried attack on Schofield, now entrenched in Franklin enroute to Nashville. Instead of following Nathan Bedford Forrest's advice to flank the Federals, Hood ordered an assault by his 20,000 troops even before the artillery arrived to support them. Surpassing the Pickett-Pettigrew assault at Gettysburg in both bravery and futility, the Army of Tennessee lost over 6,000 in this desperate attack. A despondent Cleburne before the attack responded to one of his fellow Arkansan commander's foreboding that many of them would not get back to Arkansas by saying "If we are to die, let us die like men." His last words to Hood were reported as: "I will take the enemy's works or fall in the attempt." Twice unhorsed leading his men, Cleburne died from a shot through his heart fifty yards from the Federal breastworks. He was one of several Southern generals killed in this disastrous, ill-advised attack. Enroute to Franklin, he had admired the chapel at Lucius Polk's estate, saying: "It is almost worth dying to rest in so sweet a spot." Polk had Cleburne buried there, although he was re-interred and buried in Helena in 1870. Hardee said this about his protégé Pat Cleburne:

"[He was] an Irishman by birth, a Southerner by adoption and residence, a lawyer by profession, a soldier in the British army by accident, and a soldier in the Southern armies from patriotism and conviction of duty in his manhood."

The New York City Draft Riots

For five days beginning July 13, 1863, the Irish of New York City went on a rampage against both the military draft enacted March 1, 1863 (an extension of the 1862 draft) and Negroes. For

the mostly impoverished population, much less enthusiastic after two years of war and fearful of their economic future after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the draft was especially galling. Anyone who could afford it could pay \$300 or that amount to a substitute to evade the draft. Poor Irish-American immigrants could not afford the former and would be many of the substitutes hired to serve in the Union armies. The law also ended the earlier draft exemption of the city's voluntary fire department. The prior hostility of the Irish to abolition and emancipation was aggravated in New York City in June 1863 when 3,000 striking, mostly Irish, stevedores on the city's docks were replaced by Negroes, protected by the police. As the draftees' names became known, mobs of rioters attacked the draft offices, as well as police stations. The police superintendent barely survived, but the head of the local militia was hung. Ironically, the head of the draft was Colonel Robert Nugent, formerly of the Irish 69th regiment, whose house was burned. Wounded at Fredericksburg, Nugent would be the last commander of the Irish Brigade. Across the city, Negroes became targets of the angry mobs. The rioting ended with the return of New York troops sent to Gettysburg earlier that month. The exact number of dead is unknown, but it is likely that the number well exceeded one hundred and was estimated to be as high as a thousand.

Following the restoration of order, the conscription law was temporarily suspended. After its reinstatement, the city governments of New York City and Brooklyn agreed to buy exemptions for those wishing them but unable to afford the cost, helping to deflate continuing opposition to the draft. The New York City draft riots were the largest anti-war outburst of its kind, in contrast to the opposition of many "Copperheads" (Peace Democrats) to Lincoln's war policies.

Conclusion

Despite their lowly economic and social status, their political affiliation with the Democratic party (as opposed to Lincoln's party in the North), and discrimination against them, Irish-Americans distinguished themselves in the Civil War. They enlisted (and re-enlisted) in great numbers and served with distinction on many battlefields on both sides, suffering heavy casualties in some of the bloodiest engagements. Seventy Irish-American Union soldiers received the Medal of Honor. They produced outstanding generals, most notably Sheridan for the North and Cleburne for the South. In the North, the major blot of the war was the opposition of many Irish-Americans to abolition and the 1863 New York City anti-draft and anti-Negro riots. The hope of many Irish-Americans, that service in both armies would then lead to participation in a post-war military uprising to liberate Ireland from British Unionist rule, was not realized. The Fenians, who attempted post-war invasions of Canada, were eclipsed by the Home Rule movement in Ireland until the Rising of 1916 amidst World War I and the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922.

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The USS *Monitor* - A Brief History

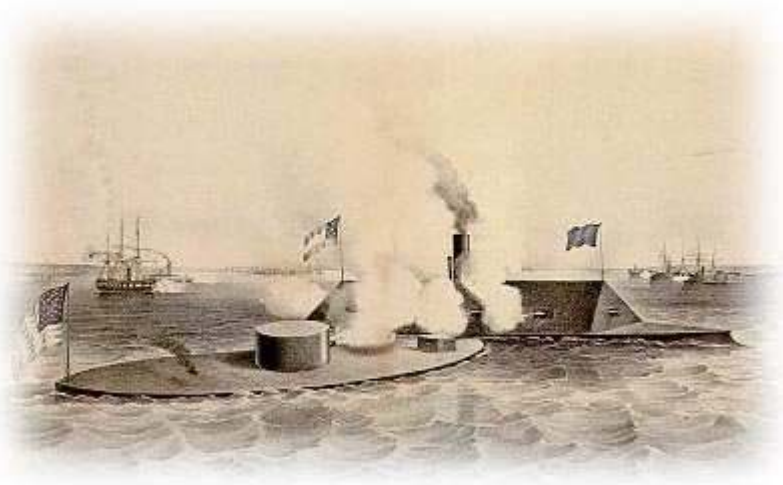
The USS *Monitor*, a 987-ton armored turret gunboat, was built at New York to the design of Swedish inventor John Ericsson. She was the first of what became a large number of "monitors" in the United States and other navies.



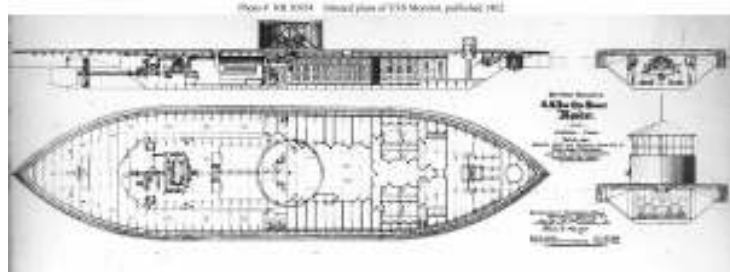
Commissioned on 25 February 1862, she soon was underway for Hampton Roads, Virginia. *Monitor* arrived there on 9 March, and was immediately sent into action against the Confederate ironclad *Virginia*, which had sunk two U.S. Navy ships the previous day. The resulting battle, the first between iron-armored warships, was a tactical draw. However, *Monitor* prevented the *Virginia* from gaining control of Hampton Roads and thus preserved the Federal blockade of the Norfolk area.

Following this historic action, *Monitor* remained in the Hampton Roads area and, in mid-1862 was actively employed along the James River in support of the Army's Peninsular Campaign. In late December 1862, *Monitor* was ordered south for further operations. Caught in a storm off Cape Hatteras, she foundered on 31 December.

Her wreck was discovered in 1974 and is now a marine sanctuary. Work is presently underway to recover major components of her structure and machinery, to be followed by extensive preservation efforts and ultimate museum exhibition.



The battle between the *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia*



The Dick Crews Annual Debate

*The Hitherto Unknown Meeting Of
Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis at
Hampton Roads in January, 1865
Lincoln will be portrayed by Mel Maurer
Jefferson Davis will be portrayed by John C.
Fazio*

Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey