



The Miniê Ball Gazette

The Newsletter of the
 Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc

April 2006, Issue 54

Old Friend Ed Bearss Returns!

On April 12th we will have an unparalleled opportunity to learn about Grant's Vicksburg Campaign of January 30-July 4, 1863 when Ed Bearss returns to the Lowcountry. Ed comes from a long line of Marines. His father was a Marine and his close relative Hiram Bearss was a Marine general who was awarded the Medal of Honor. Ed served in the Pacific during World War II where he was severely wounded. He and his wife of many years, Margie, work together as an historical writing team. They have three children: two are former marines and one is a historian.



Bearss is one of the most respected Civil War scholars alive and a battlefield tour guide second to none. He is the author of ten books and more than one hundred articles. Among his many works are a definitive three volume account of "The Vicksburg Campaign." He is a recipient of the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award, the highest award given by the department.

Ed began his distinguished 40 year career at the National Park Service in 1955 in Vicksburg, Mississippi. While there, he conducted research leading to the recovery of the
 (Continued on page 4)

ATTENTION!

- Program starts at 7:00 PM, Wed., Apr 12, 2006 in the Bluffton High School auditorium , LCWRT meeting starts at 6:45 PM
- Your cooperation is requested in observing the no drinking, no eating prohibition in the auditorium
- Buffet starts at 5:45 PM, space is limited. Please sign-up early
- There will be a Morning After at Palmetto Electric, near Wal-Mart on US 278 at 10 AM, Apr 13th.

The Vicksburg Campaign

Jack Keller



Confederacy President Jefferson Davis had stated that Vicksburg was "the nail head that held the South's two halves together," the areas east and west of the Mississippi River. Lincoln felt that Vicksburg was essential to achieve full control of the Mississippi River, a requirement of the Union's strategic "Anaconda Plan" for winning the war.

On July 4, one day after the Union victory at Gettysburg, Confederate forces at Vicksburg surrendered after a forty-six-day siege, the Confederacy was effectively split in half. This was the culmination of one of the most brilliant military campaigns of the war on the part of Union General U.S. Grant, who asserted that "the fate of the Confederacy was sealed when Vicksburg fell." During this campaign, Grant destroyed a Confederate army of 40, 000(including 29,500 captured) at a cost of 10,000 battle casualties. Grant's statue, left, at the Vicksburg battlefield commemorates this brilliant success that led to his eventual appointment as General-in-Chief of the Union armies.

Don't fail to attend Ed's "Morning After" session at Palmetto Electric. This is your unequaled opportunity to ask Ed any question about Vicksburg or for that matter about any Civil War subject. You'll never have a better opportunity to hear more knowledgeable, interesting , and animated responses.

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President's Message

Bernie Covert, Jim Hamilton and I recently met with two staff members from the Civil War Preservation Trust, Washington, DC. As we shared information, I asked if they could offer some suggestions for speakers and programs. Once we shared our roster of speakers from the last six program years, they were speechless. They had very little to offer because we have had, will have or intend to contact almost every person they might have been able to suggest. I am proud to remind our members that we are privileged to attract the premier, best military, political and social historians in the country today. In addition, we are also recognized as one of the largest roundtables in the United States. Be proud of yourself for being part of this exceptional organization.



To illustrate my point, I did an online search of Ed Bearss, our April speaker. I located two hundred of four hundred entries attached to his name. In addition to what was included in Ed's biography in this issue, I will add that Ed was included in the November 2005 issue of the *Smithsonian Magazine* in the article "35 Who Made a Difference". Ed Bearss is just one of many speakers who have made a difference and will continue to make a difference in the LCWRT as he works to bring greater understanding to our knowledge of the Civil War. We share a debt of gratitude to those who serve and have served on the Program Committee, for they are the ones responsible for bringing these outstanding speakers to us.

Please spread the news.

Johanna Verwer, President

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The Lowcountry Civil War Round Table Inc. is a not-for-profit, charitable organization as qualified under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code

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A Special Thanks to Bernie and Karen Covert and Jack Forster who rescued us in Florida after my surgery to repair a broken hip and drove our motorhome back to Bluffton **and** to Mitch and Marion Sackson for editing and publishing the January and February issues of **The Miniê Ball Gazette** while I was recuperating.

Walt Hartung

Upcoming Programs

Apr 12 Ed Bearss: Vicksburg Campaign. Grant's armies converged on Vicksburg in May and June of 1863 and entrapped a Confederate army under Lt.Gen. Pemberton. On display will be Wartime South Carolina manufactured swords. There will be a Morning After

May 10 LCWRT Annual Meeting, ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Craig Symonds: Crisis on the high seas. Great Britain is outraged when the Union removes two Confederate emissaries from a British ship. How will Lincoln respond? On display will be U.S. made prewar & wartime made pistols. There will be a Morning After



LCWRT thanks Palmetto Electric for allowing us use of their meeting room for our *Mornings After* and EXCOM meetings.

January 2006, Issue 51

Buffet Reservations for Wed., April 12th, 5:45 PM. Reservations due by noon Fri Apr 7th

Total Number of Dinners: ____ @ \$12 each = \$ _____

Mmbr Names: _____

Guest Names: _____

Member Phone: _____ Ck# _____ Date _____

Make Check Payable to: LCWRT Inc

Mail Check with this Form to:

JIM STROHECKER

125 LAKE SOMERSET CIRCLE

BLUFFTON, SC 29909

(OR PLACE IN GREEN BOX)

April 12th's Buffet Menu

Bluffton High School Cafeteria, catered by *Dukes Bar-BQ of Ridgeland*

Ham, chicken, sugar peas, corn, broccoli salad, slaw

Coconut Cake & Banana Pudding

Coffee & Tea

Coming on May 10 LCWRT Annual Meeting, ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Your vote is important!

Our guest speaker will be Craig Symonds whose topic is crisis on the high seas. Great Britain is outraged when the Union removes two Confederate emissaries from a British ship. How will Lincoln respond? On display will be U.S. made prewar & wartime made pistols. There will be a Morning After. Our buffet will include ribs, chicken and peach cobbler.

Books Worth Reading

Bob Williams

WHERE DEATH AND GLORY MEET: COLONEL ROBERT GOULD SHAW AND THE 54TH MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY, Russell Duncan, 1999, University of Georgia Press

TOMBEE: PORTRAIT OF A COTTON PLANTER, by Theodore Rosengarten, 1986, Morrow. The first half of the book is a biography of Thomas Benjamin Chaplin owner of Tombee Plantation on St. Helena Island prior to the outbreak of the War Between the States. The second portion of the book is Chaplin's dairy from 1845 to 1866. The old house still stands on St. Helena Island near Sea Side Road in the Land's End area.

A FIRE-EATER REMEMBERS: THE CONFEDERATE MEMOIRS OF ROBERT BARNWELL RHETT, edited by William C. Davis, 2000, University of South Carolina Press. Beaufort native Robert Barnwell Rhett is considered by some to be "The Father of Secession." This is a book of his memoirs of the war years and took 130 years to be published.

RHETT: THE TURBULENT LIFE AND TIMES OF A FIRE-EATER by William C. Davis, 2001, University of South Carolina Press. This is a biography of Robert Barnwell Rhett, Beaufort native and "Father of Secession." The book is about Rhett's (born a Smith) life from birth in Beaufort, SC to his death on 14 Sept. 1876.

To:

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Ed Bearss continued.

long-lost Union gunboat *Cairo*. In 1966, he transferred to Washington, D.C., and in 1981 he became the National Park Service chief historian for military sites. In 1990, he was a featured commentator for Ken Burns' PBS series, *The Civil War*, the most popular program broadcast by that network to date. Bearss, now retired, conducts detailed battlefield site tours and seminars for the Smithsonian Study Tours program.

We are most honored to have this outstanding historian back with us again.



Union gunboat *Cairo* at Vicksburg, MS.