

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2021- December - Edition CXXXIII

A Message From Our President

Well folks, it is that time of year when we start thinking about elections. This year, it is especially crucial. The same officers have been in place for a long time. Chuck has been newsletter editor for a number of years, but he not only does a good job, he enjoys it and is willing to continue. Ken has said he is willing to continue as VP. Peter is willing to stick it out as web page manager for another year and Tim Glaser has agreed to replace him. So far so good. I have been president for 4 years and need a break. I would like to hand this off to someone else so I could just concentrate on recruiting and reenacting. Jack Rush has done an outstanding job as secretary/treasurer for at least 4 years (probably more) and doesn't want to do it any more.

Here is the crux of the matter. Just about anyone can be president. You schedule meetings, preside over them and just act as ambassador for the organization. Not rocket science.

Treasurer is another matter. It does take some basic money-handling skills and you do have to make deposits and write the occasional check. We are a nonprofit organization. We cannot exist without a treasurer. If we don't get anyone to do it, we may as well pack it in. Treasurer and secretary can be split up if we have enough candidates.

Covid ruined our year last year. This year we did a little better and we have picked up a few new members over the last couple of years. I think the WVRA provides a real service in keeping history alive in our state, and I don't want to see it fall by the wayside. But we need some people to step up.

We will be having a meeting in January at the Steak House in Weston. Probably around the middle of the month. Watch the Trans-

Allegheny Facebook page or contact your unit rep.

Anyone interested in running for an office should contact me or Chuck before January.
Jim Barnes, President

Nominations to date:

President (NONE)

Vice President – KEN CONNELL

Secretary/Treasurer – (NONE)

Newsletter – CHUCK CRITCHFIELD

Webmaster – PETER BAXTER

Unit Rep (1st WV) – (NONE)

Unit Rep (25th Va) – BILL BRISENDINE

Unit Rep (Artillery) – DAVID JUDY

Unit Rep (TASAS) – (NONE)

Upcoming Events

PLEASE NOTE that all of the events in 2021-22 are dependent on the status of the pandemic. Please ensure that the event is not cancelled before attending.

Important note about the official calendar below. After some discussion at a recent meeting, it is the opinion of the group that liability insurance covers only events sanctioned by the WVRA. It is our opinion that to be sanctioned the event should at the minimum be listed on this calendar.

Sponsored

None at this time

Sanctioned (per by laws)

None at this time

Other Events recommended by WVRA members

2022

Wild West event, April 23-24, Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg

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160th Battle of Shiloh, May 14-15, Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg

June 24-26 Antique and Relic show

159th Gettysburg, July 2-3, Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg.

Wild West event, August 20-21, Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg

160th Antietam / Sharpsburg, September 17-18, Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg.

World War II event (theme to be announced), Oct 29-30, Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg.

Next Meeting

January, 2022. Exact date and time to be determined. Will be held in Weston Steakhouse.

Time for Election of Officers

This is the time of year that we nominate and elect officers.

But stop before you read any further. Don't think that the same members are willing to run for re-election....yet again. Some have filled these positions for multiple years and its time for somebody else to step in. I hesitate to say this, but if we are to continue as an organization, we need others to step up. Or we need to re-organize and change the by-laws.

Nominations to date:

President (NONE)

Vice President – KEN CONNELL

Secretary/Treasurer – (NONE)

Newsletter – CHUCK CRITCHFIELD

Webmaster – PETER BAXTER

Unit Rep (1st WV) – (NONE)

Unit Rep (25th Va) – BILL BRISENDINE

Unit Rep (Artillery) – DAVID JUDY

UNIT REP (TASAS) – (NONE)

Nominations can be sent to Jim Barnes or myself.

- Chuck Critchfield, editor.

Membership Renewal

It is time for members to renew their annual membership; new members to join or for former members to return to the fold. Dues are \$15 per year per person and \$25 per year for a family. If you wish to receive a paper copy of the newsletter there is an additional \$15 fee. The Email version of the newsletter is included in the membership. Check payable to WVRA. Dues can be sent to C. L. Critchfield, 608 Skyview Drive, Clarksburg, WV 26301.

Members who have renewed for 2022

1st West Virginia

Rick Byrd

Keith Kopshina

Mike Phillips

Chuck Critchfield

25th Virginia

Jeff Goff

Tag Ireland

Tim Glaser

Ken Connell

John Webb

Jim Allman

TASAS

Sherry Goff

Kenny Goff

Peter Baxter

Katie Goff

Morgan Goff

Phyllis Baxter

Artillery

David Judy

Susan Judy

General

Bill Burrus

Judy Kopshina

Kyle Kopshina

Pam Critchfield

Newsletter Mailed

Bill Snyder

To the First West Virginia

Sadly, I was forced to write to our regimental commander in the United States Volunteers to inform him that the 1st West Virginia no longer qualified for line status. This will probably change little, should you choose to participate in an event with the USV. Instead of being a line company, and me the commander, we will be assigned to another line company.

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I will pay the USV dues for 2022. The dues were not raised as was approved by the USV senate in 2020 because of the pandemic.

We have not had a Unit Representative on the Executive Board of the WVRA now for over a year. If somebody would like to volunteer, please let me know and I can submit your name for nomination.
- Chuck Critchfield

-- IMPORTANT NEWS --

Temporary Executive Committee Actions Still In Effect (October, 2020)

The following two proposals were approved by the five voting members of the Executive Committee in an email vote the last week of October. **NOTE – at the September, 2021 meeting, a motion was made and accepted to continue these actions until the next election of officers.**

PROPOSAL #1 “In light of the current pandemic and its effects on the hobby, the Executive Committee postpones the election of new officers of the WVRA until such time that the Committee determines that it is prudent to hold the ‘annual meeting’ in accordance with procedures described in the by laws.”

PROPOSAL #2 “The President shall have the authority to temporarily appoint, until the next duly conducted Association election, members to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee.”

If any member has a concern or question about this action, please contact President Jim Barnes or myself. These actions were simply in response to how the pandemic is affecting group meetings at the moment. Executive committee members are listed near the end of every newsletter. Members are encouraged to work through your Unit Representative. If you currently do not have a Unit Rep., work through an officer. Reminder to General Members, the WVRA President serves as your Unit Representative.

Treasurer's Report

November, 1-30 2021	
Beginning balance	\$2,624.40
Credits	
None	\$0.00
Debits	
Kanawha Artillery Yearly	
Money	\$100.00
Costs to mail newsletter	\$67.26
Ending Balance	\$2,456.53

Submitted by Jack Rush, Treasurer, WVRA

Liability Insurance

I received an electronic copy of the certificate of liability insurance for the WVRA thanks to Treasurer Jack Rush's hard work. If you would like a copy, email a request to me (Chuck Critchfield). Put WVRA in the title line if you can. You must be a member of the WVRA.

Upcoming Events

Civil War Symposium

Rick Wolfe recently announced the revival of the Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation's annual Civil War Symposium. This 12 noon – 5 pm event will be held on Saturday April 2, 2002 at the IOOF Hall in Beverly, West Virginia. Speakers include Steve French, Allan Tischler, Hunter Lesser and Cameron Mallow. See the poster attached.

- Mason-Dixon Ledger, Dec. 2021

Civil War Roundtables

The SJCWRT meets the second Tuesday of each month except December and the summer months. This month's presentation will be at the FOP Restaurant in Nutter Fort (the FOP does NOT put another group in our room so the only thing we have to compete with is the radio background music). Joe Geiger, Jr., will speak about Civil Warfare in Cabell and Wayne counties, West Virginia, 1856-1870.

The Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable is meeting again in Morgantown. Meetings are scheduled for

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the third Tuesday of every month. Check their website for more information.

Other Features

BOOK REVIEW

Master of War

By Benson Bobrick

Review by Chuck Critchfield

Who was the Civil War's greatest general? This is a discussion I have often heard. There are several candidates coming from both sides for this honor. To me there is no way to measure greatness. However, I would ponder at times at who was the most successful general. And this author, Benson Bobrick, advances the opinion that George H. Thomas was the most successful general of the Civil War.

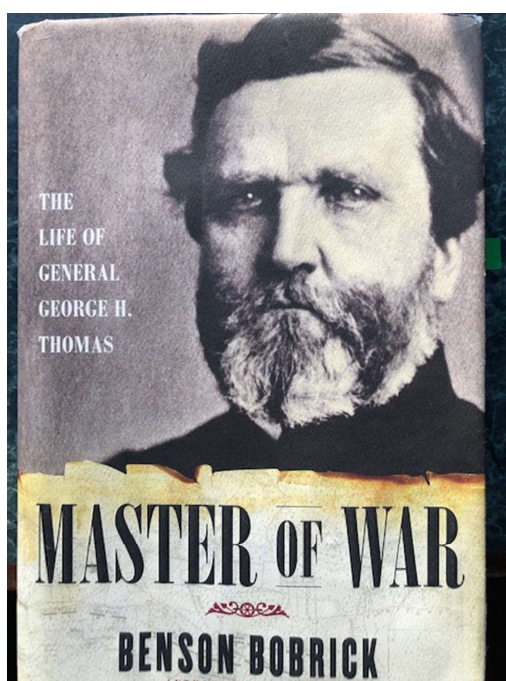
This book starts out as standard biography of Thomas but about halfway through when Grant and Sherman enter Thomas' career in a meaningful way, this book takes on a new character.

Bobrick is a bit of a maverick when compared to other historians. I have heard him speak on YouTube. And he bucks the popular historical thread about Grant and Sherman. Bobrick downgrades, criticizes and castigates Grant and Sherman, especially when it comes to comparisons with Thomas. By the end of the book the author really lowers the boom on Sherman, Grant, Sheridan and Schofield, even accusing them of falsifying some reports to steer credit away from Thomas. Bobrick becomes a bit of a cheerleader for Thomas and digs up primary sources from the mid 1860's comparing Thomas to George Washington. To Bobrick's credit, he does present a creditable defense of those claims.

His career is well documented here. From his pre-war days and close friendship with Robert E. Lee to his final days as the military commander on the West Coast. Many argue he never lost a battle and saved the Army of Cumberland at Stone's River and Chickamauga. His troops stormed Missionary Ridge, fought well through out the Atlanta campaign. And finally with command of entire army, he defeated Hood at Nashville in a battle that is still studied. He was architect of Wilson's final cavalry raid.

Thomas died at his desk in San Francisco responding to an anonymous letter on the front page of the New York Times giving credit to Schofield for the success of the Nashville Campaign – probably written by Jacob Cox with the approval of Schofield. Thomas who had tried to stay above the fray and the developing "battle of the books," finally felt the need to respond and began a letter – a letter he never finished. He suffered a stroke in mid-letter and died later that day.

This is a good book. I would recommend it to anyone interested in Union commanders. And you Confederate aficionados will get satisfaction from how Bobrick excoriates Grant and Sherman.



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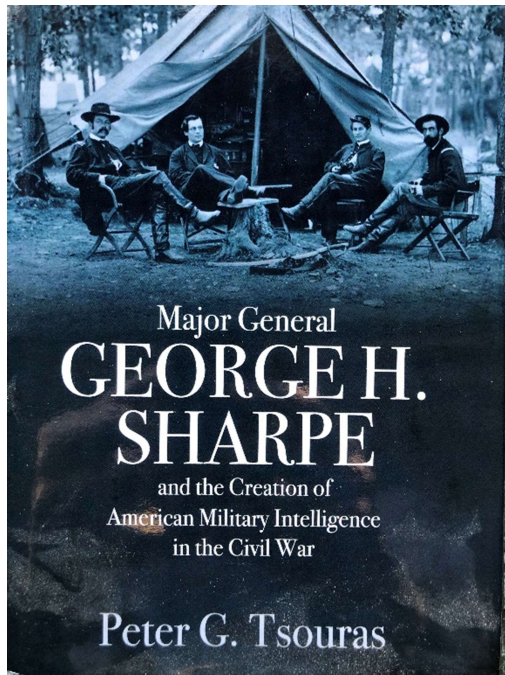
George H. Sharpe

By Peter G. Tsouras

Reviewed by Chuck Critchfield

Here is another book of contrasts. A contrast between the subject's military and civilian career. I thoroughly enjoyed the narrative of his military career. The civilian story gets bogged down.

My impression of the Army of the Potomac's intelligence gathering is influenced by Pinkerton's attempts for George McClellan. When Joseph Hooker takes command, to his credit he asks George H. Sharpe to take command of information gathering and what takes shape is the Bureau of Military Intelligence. Beginning with Chancellorsville Sharpe and his staff develop a success apparatus for gathering information from scouts, escaped slaves, prisoners and loyal civilians in Virginia.



George Meade is less a believer in the BMI and maintains his own intelligence operation which is modeled on the old method in which the army commander himself assembles all the reports and actually interviews prisoners

himself. Meade eventually gives way more and more to Sharpe and the BMI.

The descriptions of actual intelligence gathering and methods are worth the reading of this book. As I said, I had little knowledge that the Federal army did anything but bungle its way through the war in Virginia because of bad intelligence. This book displaces that notion.

The author also provides some insight on how the Confederate intelligence gathering worked. In the days between Gettysburg and the Overland Campaign, each side probed the other using a number of different methods. The Federals developed a contact deep within Richmond that had the ability to provide intelligence from the Confederate White House.

The appendices and notes provide another fascinating bit of information about the BMI and their methods.

"Classified Ads" For Sale

(Editor's note: Jim Barnes sent this to me for Tyler Claypole. I have reprinted word for word. I assume the numbers in the last paragraph are prices for the respective items. So if you need clarification, contact Mr. Claypole)

UPDATE – Tyler will sell the whole lot for \$500. (August 2021)

one confederate officer complete jacket hat and pants and union naval uniform complete with pants And confederate artillery uniform with pants and hat And union cav officer uniform with pants and hat And confederate butternut gray uniform with pants and vest

Pants are 32 waist. Jackets are large.

The naval uniform is 150 Union cav officer 300 Confederate officer 500 Confederate shell jacket is 150 Butternut gray is 225

Contact Tyler Claypole at 304-376-9043.

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From Bryan Cokeley

With regret, I am resigned to getting out of the hobby. 😞

I just don't seem to have the impetus to get to events with Hampton having left the state. He was in Texas; he now lives in Richmond. (Apparently, he took to heart those calls of "On to Richmond!") He turns 30 in May. He was 10 when we went to our first School of the Soldier. The passage of time. Maybe we all added 5 years this past year.

It seems wasteful for me to sit on all of this reenactment gear. I will keep my musket. I can make some young person a great deal on everything else – **a whole kit to get started in the hobby. If you know of someone interested, please let me know.**

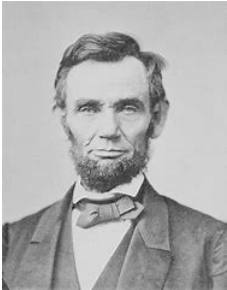
Miss everyone!

Best,

Bryan (Cokeley formerly of the 1st West Virginia)

"They Said It (or didn't)"

Quotes, misquotes and fabrications attributed to the famous, nearly famous, not famous and infamous.



"Don't believe everything you read on the Internet just because there's a photo with, a quote next to it."

-- Abraham Lincoln, February 31, 1866

"At the bottom the coming change simply meant the infinite ferment of the industrial revolution was about to work its way with a tremendously energetic and restless people who had a virgin continent to exploit. On difficulty was that the two very different societies had developed in America, one in the North and the other in the South, which would adjust themselves to the industrial age in very different ways. Another difficulty was the differences between these two societies were most infernally complicated by the existence in the South of the institution of chattel slavery. Without slavery, the problems between the sections could probably have been worked out by the ordinary give-and-

take of politics; with slavery, they became insoluble. So in 1861 the North and the South went to war, destroying one America and beginning the building of another which is not even yet complete."

- Bruce Catton (circa 1960)

"A fairy tale begins with the phrase 'once upon a time'....A war story begins with 'there we were...'."

- Anonymous

"You may strip Germany of her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force and her navy to that of a fifth-rate power; all the same, in the end if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the peace of 1919 she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors."

- Lloyd George, British Prime Minister after World War I

"What a general could do, Thomas did; no more dependable soldier for a moment of crisis existed on the North American continent, or ever did exist... Thomas comes down in history as the Rock of Chickamauga, the great defensive fighter, the man who could never be driven away but who was not much on the offensive. That may be a correct appraisal, Yet it may also be worth making note that just twice in all the war was a major Confederate army driven away from a prepared position in complete rout - at Chattanooga and at Nashville. Each time the blow that routed it was launched by Thomas."

- Bruce Catton

"Studying history will sometimes disturb you. Studying history will sometimes upset you. Studying history will sometimes make you furious. If studying history always makes you proud, and happy, you probably aren't studying history."

- Collin Humble (Facebook posting)

Other Sites

American Battlefield Trust - www.battlefields.org

Beverly Heritage Center -

www.beverlyheritagecenter.org

Mason Dixon Civil War Roundtable -

www.wvmasondixoncwr.org/

Link to Clarksburg History Museum -

<https://clarksburgmuseum.wixsite.com/history>

Battle of Gettysburg Podcast -

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Addressing Gettysburg podcast -
Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation -
www.ShenandoahAtWar.org

Current WVRA Officers

Jim Barnes - President

Ken Connell - Vice President

Jack Rush - Secretary/Treasurer

Vacant - Unit Rep (TASAS)

Vacant - Unit Rep (1st W. Va. Infantry)

Bill Brisendine - Unit Rep (25th Va. Infantry)

Dave Judy - Unit Rep (artillery)

Webmaster - Peter Baxter

Editor - Chuck Critchfield

Note - Webmaster and Editor are non-voting members of the Executive Committee.

ATTENTION - Please do not send any correspondence to the PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the liability insurance policy purchased by the WVRA, you must be a member. Karl Mulac is the administrator of the WVRA-TASAS page. I continue to use the WVRA-TASAS page to post announcements as it has been the page getting the most use.

As newsletter editor, I encourage submissions from members or readers, that are related to American history. I retain the right as editor to make a final decision on the content of this publication. Abusive or political submissions will not be published.

Editor's Corner

The Editor's chance to speak

THANK YOU – Linda and Jim Barnes, and Jack Rush for contributions to this month's Trans-Allegheny Dispatch. Thank you to Peter Baxter for posting on the WVRA website.

NOMINATIONS for WVRA officers are due this month. We have had the same slate of Association officers for a few years now. I know Jack and Jim feel they have done their share and it's time for somebody to step up and lead the organization.

Now may be the time to discuss the future of the WVRA. Do we continue as is, with the current officer structure and organization structure which has a

Federal, Confederate, Artillery and civilian unit representative? But no representative for other time periods. Do we reorganize into something different realizing that we are not in the field as often as we once were. Do we disband?

In any event, to continue as an organization, we must have officers.

NEWSLETTER – As Jim Barnes mentioned on page 1, I do enjoy doing the newsletter. In assembling the newsletter I follow the by laws by listing any future events. I rely on members to submit those events. Or friends of the WVRA send me announcements from time to time. Most event details are on line these days so I try to list the link to those pages. I rarely receive anything written anymore concerning upcoming events.

I don't get a lot of feedback from readers, members or others about specifics in the newsletter. So I tend to follow my interests – which may or may not be the interests of the group. I have a strong interest in the Civil War, so most articles relate to that period.

As I have said before, I welcome submissions from members (or even non-members) that are related to the hobby.

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$15 per year fee.

The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA.

WVRA website - wvra.org

Chuck Critchfield - Editor

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Clarksburg, WV 26301

ccritch608@yahoo.com

"We tend to create stories that appeal to us. Then we impose those stories on the past."

- A Wallace Collection video produced on the 500th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt - found on You Tube

"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world."

- Robert Penn Warren