



The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

The *RUNNER*

Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Editor **Bob Cooke**

November 2006



Our speaker this month will be Kevin Duffus. In less than a decade, Kevin Duffus has published two books and produced four award-winning documentary films comprising seven hours of television programming, all on Outer Banks history. Through extensive research, he solved the long-standing mystery of the missing 1854 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Fresnel lens, discovered the lost history of the builder of the 1870 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, preserved the amazing personal story of the WWII “baby born in a lifeboat” and oral histories of island residents, Coast Guard crews, Navy sailors and Merchant Marines, all who survived “Torpedo Junction.” Mr. Duffus will speak on the lost Fresnel lens and its “rediscovery!”

Please join us for our annual dinner meeting at the Cape Fear Club (201 Chestnut St.). The registration desk (manned by Bruce Patterson) will be open at 6 p.m., while the cost for the dinner and meeting (a package deal only, please!) is \$26. Payment must be remitted to the RT at the above P.O. Box by November 3rd. The dress for this meeting is “business casual.” Remember, guests, as well as new members are welcome!

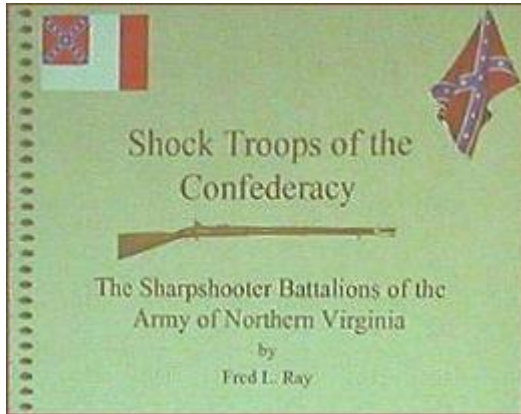
Raffle Winners: (September’s meeting) *Decision At Sea*, Bob Quinn; *Dawn Over Baghdad*, Keith Ward; *Reveille*, Mary Royal; *The Crater*, Ed Gibson; *Gettysburg*, Bruce Patterson.

(October’s meeting) *Civil War Battlefield Guide*, Ed Gibson; *Ironclad of the Roanoke*, John Wyncoff; *Battlefield*, John Moore; *Co. Aytch*, Ed Russ; *Advance and Retreat*, Bruce Patterson.

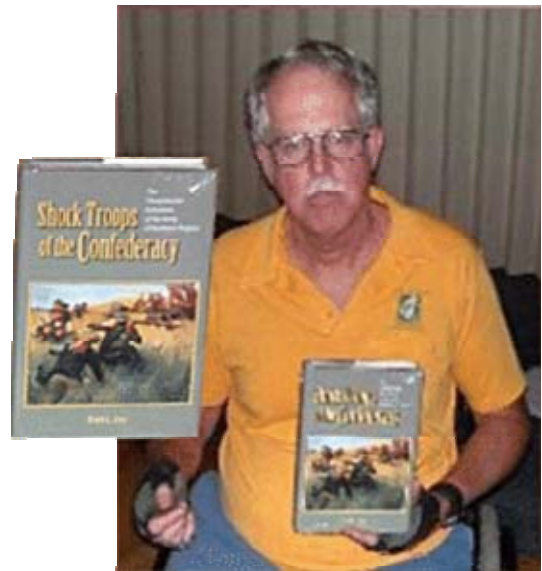


We were informed that there is still a chance to participate in the clean up at the Cameron Art Museum, site of the **Fork's Road Battlefield**. Bring your wheelbarrow, shovel, rake, axe & bush hog to the site (17th St. & Independence Blvd.) on Saturday, 9 December. For more information, call Johnnie McCoy at 620-5134.

Fred L. Ray, author of *Shock Troops of the Confederacy: The Sharpshooter Battalions of the Army of Northern Virginia*, spoke to us about his research, which culminated in the above work. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance", said Union Major General John Sedgwick as he observed the Confederate position some 500 yards away. Less than a moment later, a ball hit the General in the head, killing him almost instantly. He became another casualty of the Civil War "sharpshooter" (from the German *Scharfschütze*) who by this time (May 1864) roamed the battlefields picking off the unwary soldiers of both sides. In the Army of Northern Virginia, these men, eventually numbering nearly seven thousand, were organized into several



battalions whose duties included not only harassing the enemy with their accurate long-range fire, but also acting as skirmishers, scouts, flank and rear guards. Their first action as a unit came in May 1863 when they guarded Stonewall Jackson's flank at Chancellorsville. Mr. Ray demonstrated the use of the men as "shock troops" who plowed through the Union picket lines and then swung around to gather up as many Federals as they could, from behind. This tactic, used by (North Carolinian) Major Thomas Wooten, became known as "seine-hauling" due to its similarity of fishing along the coast. Their success rate attracted the attention of R.E. Lee, who ordered the formation of a Sharpshooter Brigade in every Division of the ANV. Mr. Ray illuminated a much-neglected subject (the last work was written before the turn of the century-the 19th century, that is!) And indicated however, that sharpshooters alone, could not win a war.



Mr. Ray also described some of the weapons used by the marksmen: the Whitworth (caliber .451, weight almost 10 lbs.), Enfield (cal. .577, weight 9½ lbs.) and several target rifles (English match rifles used mainly by Union troops) weighing anywhere from 25 to 60 pounds. In an accuracy test conducted in 1971, "various rifles fired 15 shots at 400 yards at a 72" by 72" wooden target." The U.S. Springfield hit 7 times, the British Enfield 13, while the 1842 smoothbore musket missed entirely. As for the Whitworth, 15 shots scored 15 hits on the target!

At our November meeting, we will continue to sell raffle tickets for Brian Kraus' *Bold Reconnaissance*. When 100 are sold, we will have the raffle. Come early and buy a few tickets (\$5 each).

