



# THE COURIER



## Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



**Tuesday January 13, 2015 Meeting #150**

**Canteen: 6:00 pm Dinner: 6:45 pm**

**Pine Ridge Country Club**

**30601 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, Ohio**

**Guest Speaker: John C. Fazio**

**Topic: "The Intrepid Mariners: Kearsarge and the Alabama"**

**Reservations required Guests are Welcome Please call Mike Sears**

**Phone 440 257 3956 e-Mail: [mikeanddonnas@roadrunner.com](mailto:mikeanddonnas@roadrunner.com)**



John C. Fazio has a B.A. and J.D. from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He and his wife Mary reside in Fairlawn, a suburb of Akron, Ohio. Mary retired from a career in public relations while John retired in 2013 after practicing law for forty-eight years. Between them they have seven children, all of whom have left the nest. John is a student of history, with an emphasis on European and American history, and an even greater emphasis on the most defining event in American history, the Civil War. He is a member and past president of the Cleveland Civil War Round table. He frequently speaks on the Civil War and other subjects before roundtables and other groups and has written numerous articles on the war and other topics. Mr. Fazio is a member of the Center For Inquiry (CFI) and the Western Reserve Historical Society and has recently written a book that is to be released in March of 2015, entitled: **Decapitating The Union – Jefferson Davis and Juda Benjamin and the plot to assassinate Lincoln.**

On June 19, 1864, the USS Kearsarge engaged the CSS Alabama in the English Channel near Cherbourg, France. The Alabama was the pride of the Confederate Navy; it roamed the Atlantic, the Pacific and Indian oceans while capturing sixty-four Union merchant ships and their crews. The CSS Alabama was built at John Laird & Sons shipyard on the Mersey River near Liverpool, England for a French commercial interest. The French company was acting as agents for the Southern Confederacy because England had laws prohibiting the sale of war ships to belligerent nations. Therefore, the "Alabama" was constructed without guns and was launched in 1862 as the Enrica.

## CIVIL WAR JOURNAL of Franco M. Sperrazzo: Events Coordinator

**December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting: “An Evening with Mary Todd Lincoln”** Thanks to the organization We Made History ,members and guests present for our holiday gala were highly entertained by an outstanding program. Mrs. Marian King portrayed the controversial Mary Todd, born of an affluent family in Lexington Kentucky, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> 1818. Mrs. King took us through a tapestry of her life from the time she met and was courted by our 16<sup>th</sup> resident Abraham Lincoln. She traveled through the Civil War years in the White House; losing three children; and her later life dealing with severe depression. Charter NEOCWRT member Dale Fellows is a first person character of the American History Group, so look for future meaningful performances from this ensemble.

**NEOCWRT Club Dues 2015:** Club membership dues remain solvent at \$55.00 for year 2015. Bring a check for this amount made out to NEOCWRT separate from the \$25.00 dinner fee. Sergeant of Arms Mile Sears will be assisted by Secretary Bill Meissner, at the Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> meeting entrance table. You can also mail your check the Mr. William Meissner, 9571 Headlands Road, Mentor Ohio, 44060. By our Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> gathering, we will announce new club rates for partners and family memberships.

**New Administration Officers for 2015: The 18<sup>th</sup> president of the NEOCWRT is 6 year member Bernard A. Taub.** Bernie has taken a pro-active stance in club matters and is always willing to step in where he is needed. Vice President in waiting is 12 year pro William Wilson. Bill was treasurer for three years and has displayed his generous capabilities to the club. A complete list of cabinet officers and past presidents will be featured in the forthcoming February Courier.

**Tribute to Flag Bearer Terry Reynolds:** Terry Reynolds has been a most dedicated member since 2004. Terry has worn many hats, like new member co-director with Steve Abby. He has served on several ad hoc committees and supported many Fall Field Trips and Spring Tours with his First Lady Mary Ellen. Terry, without much fan-fare, filled a void six years ago volunteering to be our club flag bearer. He proudly displayed our United States and Confederate flags in a uniform manner. They are beautiful, cumbersome and heavy. Thanks to Captain Reynolds for his due diligence in so many ways. We will now be served by the trusty hands of Tom Horvath Jr. Young Tom joined his father Tom Sr. when he came on board in 2013.

**Executive Committee Meeting Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Many new issues will be examined and responsibilities delegated when the cabinet convenes Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> at Eat N Park Restaurant in Willoughby Hills. This three hour dinner session from 6:00- 9:00pm will occur in the private party room under the guidance of President Bernie Taub. On the agenda will be the admission of women into the NEOCWRT and the transition process; Spring Day Tour; Summer James A. Garfield Fourth Annual Speaker Symposium; proposed Fall Field Trip and other topics of importance. Members are welcome to participate or merely observe at our meeting place at Rt. 91/SOM Center Rd. off Interstate 90.

**New Members for 2014 and the passing of two Veterans:** The NEOCWRT welcomes Rich Miklaucic, Mike Napoli and David Lintern in 2014. They and other new members will be profiled in future Courier segments. Sadly we lost two significant soldiers in the past thirteen months. Dr. Robert Eiben, a charter member, departed during the 2013 holiday season on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Also with us from the beginning was our dear friend and charter member Robert Bruce Beale. Bruce left us just a few months ago. Theodore J. Karle will pay tribute to their memory with a memorial program to honor them next week.

**Recovering Medical & Health Concerns:** We continue to keep founder Frank Yannucci in our thoughts and prayers in hope he may be able to rejoin his comrades in the near future. Ted Karle’s return to good condition will take several weeks of therapy and we acknowledge his challenges ahead. Bill Koeckert had an injury over the holidays as friend Errol Savage informed our editors. Bill is a tough Army veteran and is recovering while staying with relatives.

**January 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting: We wish to extend a special Welcome to my Good Friend, John C. Fazio, a long time Abraham Lincoln scholar.**

Happy New Year! Franco

## The Valiant John Bell Hood

John Bell Hood was born on June 29, 1831 and raised in Owingsville, Kentucky. His father, John Willis was a doctor and successful land owner. His mother, Theodosia French Hood had a brother, Richard French, who was the U. S. Congressman for the Ninth District of Kentucky. Congressman French secured an appointment to the United States Military Academy for his nephew, John Bell Hood, who graduated from the Academy in 1853. Hood ranked 44 out of a class of 52 cadets. He was nearly expelled from the academy his senior year after receiving 196 demerits. Accumulating 200 demerits in a single year was grounds for expulsion from West Point. Hood's classmates at the Academy included: James McPherson, John Schofield, and Phil Sheridan. *Photo below left: John Bell Hood, National Archives*



In 1852, Colonel Robert E. Lee was assigned to West Point and became the Superintendent of the Academy. Major George H. Thomas was one of the artillery instructors. During his senior year, Hood was absent from his quarters without permission. Hood and a few of his friends liked to frequent Benny Havens Tavern whenever they could steal away from the academy grounds. Colonel Lee punished cadet lieutenant Hood by demoting him to the rank of cadet private and issuing a public reprimand in front of the entire corps of cadets. Hood suffered much embarrassment from this episode. He was fearful of failing his senior exams and seriously considered just leaving the academy. His friend, John Schofield talked him out of leaving. Schofield encouraged him to apply himself to his studies and not be discouraged by anything else. Hood passed his final exams and did graduate but not before establishing a very unusual record at the academy. The library at West Point contained more than 20,000 volumes for the cadets to read and use for research. However, the library records indicate that cadet Hood signed out only two books during his entire four years at the military academy: Jane Porter's "Scottish Chiefs" and Sir Walter Scott's "Rob Roy".

John Bell Hood was commissioned a brevet second lieutenant and served with the 4<sup>th</sup> U. S. Infantry in California. Hood was later assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> U. S. Cavalry in Texas and served under Colonels Albert Sidney Johnston and Robert E. Lee. When the Southern States seceded from the union, many officers and enlisted men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> U S Cavalry made their way to their home states to sign up with the volunteer regiments near their homes. John Hood was disappointed that his home state of Kentucky decided to remain neutral and not join the Confederacy.

Hood joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry and was promoted to the rank of colonel. Later, Hood was given command of the brigade which became known as the Texas Brigade. The Texas Brigade became part of the Army of Northern Virginia and saw much action. On June 27, 1862, during the Battle of the Seven Days, Colonel Hood and Texans led the charge that broke through the Union line at Gaines Mill. General Lee recognized Hood's valor and the fighting spirit of the Texas Brigade. Hood was promoted to brigadier general.

John Hood was given command of a division in Major General James Longstreet's Corps and was instrumental in the devastating flank attack on Union General John Pope's forces at Second Manassas. During General Lee's Maryland campaign, Hood's division held Turner's Gap until the remainder of Lee's army had occupied the crescent high ground position at Sharpsburg. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, Hood's division came to the rescue of Stonewall Jackson's corps on the Confederate left near Dunker Church, driving back the Federal assaults. Hood was promoted to the rank of major general for his performance at Sharpsburg.

On July 2, 1863 at the Battle of Gettysburg, Maj. Gen. Longstreet reluctantly ordered General Hood to attack and break the Union left near the Devil's Den. General Hood was struck by shell fragmentation in his left arm. The arm did not require amputation but he lost the use of it for the rest of his life. Hood was sent to Richmond, Virginia to recuperate. While in Richmond he met Sally Buchanan Preston, a prominent South Carolina socialite who was visiting the wounded soldiers in the Richmond hospitals. John Hood fell hopelessly in love with the young lady. Mary Boykin Chestnut wrote of General Hood: "When Hood came with his sad face, the face of an old Crusader, who believed in his Cause, and his Crown, we were not prepared for such a man as a beau-ideal of the wild Texan. He was tall, thin, and shy, his blue eyes and light hair, a tawny beard and a vast amount of it, covered the lower part of his face, the whole appearance of awkward strength." Hood proposed to Sally Preston but she did not respond. His feelings for her were not mutual.





In September of 1863, General R. E. Lee dispatched two divisions from James Longstreet's Corps to Tennessee. Hood recovered enough of his strength to resume command of his division and played a major role in the Confederate assault on the Union's Army of the Cumberland led by General William Rosecrans at the Battle of Chickamauga. Hood led the attack through the gap in the Federal lines and was badly wounded. His right leg had to be amputated just below the hip. His surgeons did not expect him to survive but he did. General Longstreet recommended that Hood be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. Hood was sent back to Richmond to recuperate; there he met with President Jefferson Davis. Davis was impressed by Hood's courage and valor. *The picture on the left: John Bell Hood and his Texas Brigade by Dale Gallon.*

General Hood resumed his courtship of Sally Preston but to no avail. Sally's family would not approve of her marriage to a man with so many infirmities. General Hood was presented prosthesis by the men of his division. The artificial leg was made of cork and produced in Europe. Southern blockade runners brought it back with them on one of their voyages.

Hood was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and departed Richmond to become a corps commander in The Army of Tennessee under General Joseph E. Johnston. Jefferson Davis had a strained relationship with Joe Johnston as a result of his use of "fallback positions" during McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, in the spring of 1862. Now Johnston's forces were attempting to maneuver again, and giving up large tracts of real estate, hoping to make a flank attack on Sherman's forces closing down on Atlanta. Hood was frustrated with Johnston's tactics and allegedly wrote to Confederate government officials complaining of Johnston leadership. On July 17, 1864, Davis removed Joe Johnston from command of the forces defending Atlanta and replaced him with General Hood. Hood was promoted to the temporary rank of full general.

General Hood launched four attacks on Sherman's forces around the besieged city of Atlanta. All of the attacks failed and Hood's forces suffered enormous casualties. Hood evacuated Atlanta on September 2, 1864 and ordered all military supplies that could not be removed from the city to be burned. Large sections of Atlanta were consumed in the raging fires.

In the fall of 1864, Hood developed a plan to disrupt Sherman's march across Georgia and recapture Nashville, Tennessee. Hood would launch an attack on Sherman's supply and communication lines between Chattanooga and Atlanta. Hood would move the Army of Tennessee north into Alabama and into central Tennessee with a goal of attacking the scattered Union forces and destroying them piecemeal. With Sherman's supply trains in danger, he would be forced to confront Hood in a decisive battle. After defeating Sherman's forces, Hood would move his army into Kentucky, moving northeast through the Cumberland Gap, so that he could come to the aid of Robert E. Lee and break the Union Army's siege at Petersburg.

Sherman was not going to disengage from his offensive through Georgia to deal with threats to his supply lines in Tennessee. His army would live off the land and he sent General George Thomas to take command of all the Union forces in Tennessee and secure the Union's hold on Nashville. General John Schofield and the Army of the Ohio were to link up with Thomas and the Army of the Cumberland at Nashville. Hood tried to trap Schofield and The Army of the Ohio before they joined Thomas at Nashville.



Hood, at age 33, was the youngest man to command an army during the Civil War. He had 39,000 men under his command and it was imperative that he trap Schofield before he could link up with Thomas at Nashville. The combined Federal forces totaled more than 60,000 men.

On November 29, 1864, Hood and his army cornered Schofield and the Army of the Ohio at Spring Hill, Tennessee. It was late in the afternoon and Hood was enduring a lot of pain. He tried to order his officers to attack Schofield's position but the orders were not understood. Hood was taking Laudanum, an opium laced powder with alcohol to kill the pain from his wounds. He went to sleep and none of his officers

wanted to make a night assault. *Photo on the left: Union forces at Nashville, December, 1864, Library of Congress*

The next morning, Hood awoke to discover that Schofield and his army had escaped to Franklin, Tennessee and erected strong fortifications. Hood was furious with General Benjamin Cheatham, his second in command, along with Gen. Patrick Cleburne. Hood was so angry he questioned their courage and ordered an infantry assault on Schofield's lines at Franklin.

It was November 30, 1864, Hood's men were cold, tired and in dire need of food and shelter. Nathan Bedford Forrest told General Hood: "If you were a whole man I'd whip you to within an inch of your life. G—D---It."

Hood's 22,000 men had to attack across an open field that was two miles deep, without artillery support to soften the Union fortifications. One hundred Confederate regiments made the attack. Hood's army suffered more than 6000 casualties in the action. Fifty four Confederate regimental commanders were killed or wounded at Franklin. "The Death Angel was there to gather the last harvest." Sam Watkins, Company Aytch

On December 1, 1864, Schofield marched his men out of Franklin and into Nashville. Ice storms battered the Nashville area while President Lincoln and General Grant grew increasingly impatient with George Thomas and his command of the Union forces there. Hood now found himself on the defensive. Grant insisted that Thomas stop delaying and attack Hood's army. On December 15<sup>th</sup> the weather cleared and Thomas ordered the attack. Hood's army managed to hold on until December 16 when they were forced to retreat after suffering heavy casualties. What was left of Hood's Army of the Tennessee, little more than 15,000 men retreated to Tupelo, Mississippi. On January 13, 1865, John Bell Hood resigned his command and the war for him came to an end...

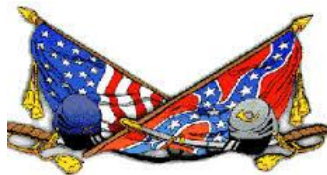
*References for The Valliant John Bell Hood:*

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*Woodworth, Steven, Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The failure of Confederate Command in the West, University of Kansas*



## **We Need Your Help!**

**As the Northeast Ohio Civil War Roundtable heads toward our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, your help is needed. Of the approximately sixty members, there are sixteen who are currently taking an active role in its operation.**

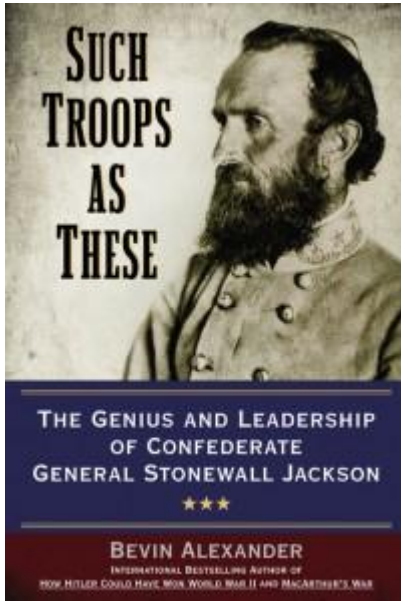
**Most of these sixteen are the same members who are taking on more and more obligations. We need NEW FACES to provide fresh ideas to set us on a path for the next twenty years. The individual jobs or tasks take only a few hours a month. The exception is the editor of our newsletter, The Courier. More time is required to prepare it nine times a year. We are currently seeking a new editor (or co-editors).**

**So, to you members, who have not helped in the past, please contact one of our board members and offer a little time to assist in making our Roundtable the kind of organization YOU WANT. Thank you.**

**Contact anyone of the following:**

**Steve Abbey – Bob Baucher – Arlan Byrne – Carl Dodado – Tom Horvath – Ted Karle – Norton London – Bill Meissner – John Sandy – Mike Sears - Franco Sperrazzo – Bernie Taub – Joe Tirpak**

## **Such Troops as These – *The Genius and Leadership of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson* by Bevin Alexander – Book Review by Scott Hagara**



This recently published book was authored by Bevin Alexander, who seems to absolutely worship Stonewall Jackson. He states in the book's introduction that Jackson is "by far the greatest general ever produced by the American people", and further, he "ranks as one of the supreme military geniuses in world history". With a buildup such as this, Alexander endeavors to prove his thesis. Warning, if you don't think that every other general in the Civil War, including Robert E. Lee, was an idiot, you may want to skip this book.

The book begins with much of the familiar history of Thomas Jackson, but the primary focus is his actions during the Civil War. It contends that Jackson was the first military leader to understand modern warfare given the increased range of the Minie-ball rifle, and the mobility of the lightweight "Napoleon" cannon. No longer could an army attack an enemy head on. Jackson determined that the only way an army could succeed would be to place it in a strategic position where the enemy would have to attack, and then be able to destroy the attack and then counter attack. Jackson wanted the Confederate army to maintain a defensive strategy with rapid flank attacks rather than employing frontal attacks. The author states that General Jackson

repeatedly tried to get Jefferson Davis and General Lee to adopt this strategy, to no avail.

While there is little doubt that General Jackson was a master at military tactics, as he proved in the Shenandoah Valley campaign, the author does not provide even one shortcoming of Jackson, even dismissing his failures during the Seven Day's battle. Every failure by the Army of Northern Virginia could be blamed on the fact that Jackson did not command the army. The author repeatedly offers a position that if Jackson, and not Lee, was in command; the South would have won the war. He holds that Jackson was kept from ultimate command because he was not of the Southern aristocracy that ruled the South. This idea seems to be a stretch given that he had a rather short body of work in a subordinate position, and involves a great amount of hindsight that Jackson would have made great decisions in every engagement going forward.

The book outlines the notable battles involving Jackson, and I found the descriptions of troop movements to be very confusing. It offers very little insight to the human side of Stonewall Jackson and his army, primarily outlining troop movements and highlighting the failure of other officers. I found it particularly annoying in the treatment of General Lee and the failure to make any mention of the war in the western theater. There was little evidence of a "partnership" between Jackson and Lee presented in the book. One would think that the story would end with the death of Jackson (which was only briefly documented), but the author goes on to Gettysburg, allowing a little more Lee-bashing. Of course, the author states that if Jackson was with Lee at Gettysburg, the outcome would have been different. In fact, the book closes with the statement regarding the Confederate army at Gettysburg: "its senior commander, Robert E. Lee, was a second-rate individual. With this deadweight holding it down, the army was unable to ascend to glory."

Published in 2014 by Berkley Caliber, the book contains 283 pages, a number of notes, and several maps of the battlefields. It is available at the Mentor Public Library and at Amazon.