



“Boys, he ain’t much for looks, but if we’d had him we wouldn’t have been caught in this trap.” So stated a Federal prisoner at Harpers Ferry as he viewed Confederate General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson on September 15, 1862. This unnamed prisoner was one of over 11,000 Federal soldiers captured that day—the largest surrender of U.S. troops until the capture of the island of Corregidor in the fall of the Philippines in 1942.

Days earlier, when Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River into Maryland, the commanding general boldly decided to split his undermanned army—even though George McClellan’s larger Army of the Potomac loomed somewhere to his front. What prompted this outrageous maneuver was Lee’s knowledge that a Union force of over 12,000 stood to his rear in the mountainous town of Harpers Ferry. If ignored, this Federal garrison could either attack Lee’s rear or help block his retreat from Union-held territory. Lee naturally selected his most effective offensive commander, Stonewall Jackson, to lead a three-pronged operation in capturing the town. Lee’s orders called for Jackson to begin his march from Frederick on September 10, capture Harpers Ferry, and return by September 12. It was a nearly impossible task since the looping march toward Harpers Ferry and back to Boonsboro was 72 miles—and Jackson was ordered to cover the difficult trek in 72 hours! Further complicating the assignment, Jackson would have to cross Catoctin Mountain and South Mountain before swinging in a circuitous route, then traverse the Potomac River without bridges or pontoons. All the while he must coordinate three separate units, heading along three different routes, and capture two steep mountain sides in order to trap the Federal garrison.

Although Jackson could not complete the march in the allotted time, he succeeded in accomplishing his mission on September 15. That day, Jackson sent a message to Robert E. Lee, “*Through God’s blessing, Harpers Ferry and its garrison are to be surrendered.*” Besides the 11,000 prisoners, Jackson’s booty included 13,000 small arms, 73 cannon, and approximately 200 wagons filled with Federal supplies. Hoping for some much-needed rest, Jackson was instead ordered to march another seventeen miles over difficult terrain to the little town of Sharpsburg where Lee and McClellan were about to fight the Civil War’s bloodiest day.

Our program this month is “*The Union Surrender at Harpers Ferry*,” as told by Steve Hawks. Steve is a member of the Grand Rapids Civil War Round Table and is employed by the Williams Group, a communications company. A multi-media producer, Steve specializes in creating CD-ROMS and websites. He is the author and producer of the award winning CD-ROM documentary, “12 Roads to Gettysburg.” He is currently working on a documentary of the Antietam Campaign. Steve promises that his program will include “an interesting tale of recovering alcoholics and dancing masters, incompetence, and daring heroism, as well as detailing one of the most colorful regiments in the Union army.”

Sounds like a terrific evening! Better mark your calendars now—**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.**

* * * * *

Our thanks to last month’s speaker, **Pierce Roberts**, for his excellent program, “*The Battle of Chickamauga.*” Pierce developed the background and deployment of armies prior to the battle and clearly explained the confusing two-day battle—a fine job!

FALL FIELD TRIP:

This will be our last meeting before we embark to Richmond. All final details of the trip will be discussed. All payments—\$40 for bus, museum fees, etc., and \$23 for Saturday’s dinner—must be paid at this month’s meeting. For those who still owe, please submit your check to Jerry Maxwell (made out to Carroll Tietz).

Al Oaks announces the “Annual History and Military Memorabilia Show” to be held on Sunday, November 4 from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Clawson (870 N. Main Street). Featured items will include antique



arms (manufactured before 1898); Civil War photographs, documents and books; battlefield finds; military field equipment; Indian artifacts; antique knives and swords; and much more. You are encouraged to show up and buy, sell, or trade. If you are interested in your own table for displays, \$20 fee, contact AI at 248-541-8037.

QUIZ: All questions pertain to the invasion of Maryland and the surrender of Harpers Ferry.....

1. Which two Confederate generals under Jackson’s command were in charge of divisions that pushed along different routes toward Harpers Ferry?
2. What two elevations did each capture leading to the surrender of the indefensible town?
3. Which Union general surrendered to Stonewall Jackson at Harpers Ferry, and where were the Federal prisoners sent to await exchange?
4. Which aging Union colonel, accidentally killed at the time of the surrender, initially led the garrison at Harpers Ferry? And, which Michigan officer preferred charges of “drunkenness” against him for his inefficient efforts at First Bull Run?
5. In which famous orders did Robert E. Lee detail the splitting of his army and who actually lost the orders?
6. Which two Federal soldiers found the orders and what were the orders wrapped around?
7. Which elevation did Jackson seize to trap the town and which divisional commander did he leave behind to handle the prisoners and captured supplies?
8. What Federal colonel is credited by most for his bold escape with 1000 men before the surrender, and at which battle was he later killed? [Extra Credit: Who does Ken Baumann credit with the daring escape?]
9. Name the three vital passageways that cut through South Mountain?
10. Which outspoken Confederate general had the unenviable task of defending South Mountain from the advancing Federals, and to which future Union general (with three brothers who fought for the Confederacy) did he serve as best man in his wedding prior to the war?

* * * * *

On the morning of Sunday, September 14, 1862, the outcome of the Confederate invasion of Maryland hinged on the passes through South Mountain. Robert E. Lee’s army lay west of the mountains in five widely scattered segments. To the east George McClellan’s powerful army, spurred into action by the discovery of a lost copy of Lee’s orders, was moving toward the defiles. If the Federals penetrated South Mountain, Lee’s army faced the dire consequences of being shattered piecemeal. Valiantly, the Confederates fought off superior numbers until the exhausted Rebels withdrew around midnight. Crucial time had been saved and Lee’s divided army was allowed to regroup for the bloody fight three days later at Antietam. During the fighting, a young and promising general from each side lost his life.

Confederate Samuel Garland, Jr., hailed from Lynchburg, Virginia. After graduating from the Virginia Military Institute in 1849, Garland received a law degree from the University of Virginia. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was commissioned a colonel of the 11th Virginia Infantry and assigned to the command of James Longstreet. Following the Battle of First Manassas, Longstreet reported that Garland “displayed more coolness and energy than is usual amongst veterans of the old service.” A restless, studious officer, Garland seemed destined for higher command. Wounded at the Battle of Williamsburg, Garland received praise from A.P. Hill, who noted that “though wounded, [Garland] refused to leave the field, and continued to lead his regiment until the battle was over, and his example had a most happy effect in showing his men how to win the battle.”

At South Mountain the 31-year-old Garland, now a brigadier general, led his five North Carolina regiments in defense against the advancing Federals. During the fighting, Eliakim Scammon’s Union brigade of three Ohio regiments, supported by a battery, drove up the mountainside against Garland’s Tarheels. Garland rode to his threatened left flank



where he met Colonel Thomas Ruffin of the 13th North Carolina. Ruffin impatiently demanded, “General, why do you stay here? You are in great danger.” Calmly, Garland replied reassuringly, “I may as well be here as yourself.” Ruffin had barely spoken when he fell with a bullet in the hip. Moments later Garland tumbled to the ground, writhing in pain, with a mortal wound. One look and the men knew he was finished.

Garland was subsequently buried in Lynchburg beside his wife and son, who had both died after the war began. Daniel Harvey Hill claimed that Garland was “the most fearless man I ever knew....Had he lived his talents, pluck, energy and purity of character must have put him in the front rank of his profession, whether in civil or military life.”

Thirty-nine year old Federal General Jesse Reno fell mortally wounded from a Rebel sharpshooter’s bullet near the same spot that Garland had lost his life earlier that day. Reno, a Virginian by birth, had graduated number eight in West Point’s class of 1846 with McClellan and Jackson. Fighting bravely in the Mexican War, he received two brevet promotions for gallantry. After teaching at West Point, Reno served under Albert Sidney Johnston on the Mormon Expedition. During the Civil War, he rose to the rank of major general and commanded the IX Corps of the Army of the Potomac. He was a stocky and determined no-nonsense regular.

As the campaign in Maryland commenced, Reno met with aging Barbara Fritchie in Frederick. He proposed to buy the flag she was said to have waved at Stonewall Jackson as he marched in front of her home. In truth, the story was merely apocryphal as Jackson had not marched near her home, nor had she waved a Union flag in his face. Fritchie, at age 95, did, however, present Reno with a homemade flag that he carefully stowed in his saddlebag. Now in the dusk of September 14, Reno fell with a mortal wound. Brought back on a stretcher to the command post of General Sam Sturgis, Reno called out, “Hallo, Sam, I’m dead!” The strong voice seemed so natural that Sturgis thought his friend must be joking. Sturgis said he hoped it was not as bad as all that. “Yes, yes, I’m dead—good-by!” Reno repeated, and minutes later he died.

Reno’s remains were taken by his brother to Baltimore. From there they were transferred to Boston, where his wife lived, and placed in a vault in Trinity Church. He was buried on September 20 with his casket covered by the flag given to him by Barbara Fritchie. On April 9, 1867, he was removed to Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Lafayette McLaws and John G. Walker
2. Maryland Heights and Loudoun Heights
3. Julius White and oddly Camp Douglas in Chicago
4. Dixon Miles and Israel Richardson
5. Special Orders No. 191 and no one knows for certain
6. Pvt. Barton W. Mitchell and Sgt. John M. Bloss; wrapped around three cigars
7. Bolivar Heights and A.P. Hill
8. Benjamin “Grimes” Davis and Brandy Station [Extra Credit: Col. Arno Voss of the 12th Illinois]
9. Fox’s Gap, Turner’s Gap, Crampton’s Gap
10. D.H. Hill and John Gibbon

Remember to attend this month’s meeting for “*The Union Surrender at Harpers Ferry*,” presented by **Steve Hawks**. It all happens on the evening of **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24** at the downtown Farmington Public Library. The meeting begins at 7:30 P.M. See you there.....