

*Civil War Roundtable of North Florida*



**CWRTNF**

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*The Courier*

*Newsletter of the Civil War Roundtable of North Florida  
Founded 2012*

Email: [civilwar@post.com](mailto:civilwar@post.com)

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Gainesville, Florida

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**MISSION STATEMENT/PURPOSE**

**The Civil War Roundtable of North Florida (CWRTNF)** is dedicated to the study, preservation and discussion of the events and people that were part of the War Between the States. Membership is open to all who have an interest in the American Civil War (1861-1865).

**MONTHLY MEETING**

The Civil War Round Table of North Florida (CWRTNF) meets the first Thursday of each month (except holidays). The meeting is open to the public.

Location: Alachua County Library  
Millhopper Branch - Meeting Room B  
3145 NW 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Gainesville, FL 32606  
(352) 334-1272

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 PM

## **THIS MONTH'S MODERATOR**

John Walsh

## **FEATURED SPEAKER**

Speaker: John McLean

Topic: "The Battle of Gainesville"

The Battle of Gainesville (not to be confused with the First Skirmish of Gainesville of 14 February 1864) was fought on 17 August 1864, when a Confederate force defeated Union detachments on a raid from the Union garrison in the Jacksonville, Florida area.

Gainesville, site of a railroad junction and depot in north central Florida, was the scene of two small-scale engagements during the war. The Battle of Gainesville took place on 17 August 1864, in the town square; many townspeople viewed the fighting from the windows of the nearby Beville house.

## **AGENDA**

- Refreshments  
John Buckta
- Administrative – Membership Discussion  
John Walsh
- Presentation  
John McLean
- Open Discussion/Suggestions  
Group

## **"THIS MONTH 150 YEARS AGO"**

### ***EAST***

August 2, 1863 - Following Lee's retreat from Gettysburg, the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac establish lines with Virginia's Rappahannock River between them.

August 8, 1863 - Robert E. Lee offers his resignation to Jefferson Davis. Davis refuses the offer.

### ***WEST***

August, 29, 1863 - The Army of the Cumberland begins the Chickamauga Campaign, heading east for passes in Lookout Mountain.

## **NEWS OF THE CWRTNF**

Attendance Last Meeting: 14

We now have an Internet mailbox. [civilwar@post.com](mailto:civilwar@post.com) Please use this e-mail address to contact the Civil War Roundtable of North Florida.

Many thanks to last meeting's speaker Sid Mayer for his entertaining presentation of "Civil War Humor Stories" and to Bob Wright for providing delicious snacks and drinks.

A special thanks and "Well Done" to Terry Houston for his time and efforts in contacting local newspapers to post our meeting announcements.

'Welcome Aboard" to new attendees:

- Tom DiCola
- Stevie Walsh
- Emory Gross Jr.
- Stephanie Pastore
- John McLean

Upcoming CWRTNF Meetings and Speakers:

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Upcoming Outside Events:

- The Matheson Museum  
513 East University Avenue  
Gainesville, FL 32601  
352-378-2280  
[www.mathesonmuseum.org](http://www.mathesonmuseum.org)

Join the Matheson Museum as it commemorates the Civil War "Battle of Gainesville":

- Wednesday, August 14, 2013, 6 pm, Symposium
- Saturday, August 17, 2013, 10 am, Mini-Re-enactment
- Saturday, September 28, 2013, 10 am – 3 pm: Olustee Civil War Expo

## **CIVIL WAR FACT**

After the Battle of Gettysburg, the discarded rifles were collected and sent to Washington to be inspected and reissued. Of the 37,574 rifles recovered, 24,000 were still loaded.

## GETTYSBURG SPECIAL ARTICLE

### **Gettysburg overshadows all other Civil War battles**

**The battle at Gettysburg, which took place 150 years ago, had a massive scale and staggering bloodshed.**

By Diane Fischler

The nation has been commemorating the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War for the past two years. But the Battle at Gettysburg, which took place 150 years ago on three sweltering days — July 1, 2 and 3, 1863 — overshadows all others fought during those four devastating years of war: 1861 to 1865.

Many historians have referred to this battle — the largest military engagement ever to take place in the Western Hemisphere — as the “turning point of the Civil War.” Although the surrender of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, was far more significant to the Union's overall war strategy, the name “Gettysburg” resonates in American history as the Civil War's most well-known battle, with its massive scale and staggering bloodshed.

It is difficult to grasp cold statistics from a conflict 150 years ago — unless we compare its facts and figures to those from more familiar 20th century battles or to numbers that Gainesville residents can relate to. About 164,000 troops fought on these fields in southern Pennsylvania. Nearly 94,000 served in the Army of the Potomac under General George G. Meade—5,500 more than a packed Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. General Robert E. Lee commanded roughly 70,000 Army of Northern Virginia soldiers — twice the number who attend Gatornationals on just one day. Casualty figures (killed, wounded, captured and missing) for the combined armies over the course of those three days in July amounted to an estimated 46,000 to 51,000 men. That number would translate into every University of Florida student becoming a casualty statistic.

The battle's climax, Pickett's Charge, which started around 3 p.m. on July 3, involved 12,500 Confederates marching across a one-mile open field. The University of Florida's O'Connell Center holds almost 12,000 spectators. Imagine 6,500 basketball fans standing up for a half-time stretch. Those 6,500 Gator fans represent the approximate number of Rebels who became casualties in their suicidal advance toward the center of the Union line. In their paced movement forward and then rapid withdrawal, half the Confederates assaulting Cemetery Ridge were killed, wounded, or captured—in less than an hour.

On Iwo Jima, site of some of World War II's most intense fighting in the Pacific, 70,000 Marines participated in a 36-day battle. The number of Marines on Iwo approximated the size of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg. Almost 7,000 Marines died on the black volcanic sands of that island during five weeks of killing Japanese soldiers entrenched in underground strongholds. The combined number of Union and Confederate deaths at Gettysburg was 6,000 to 8,000 soldiers — in just 56 hours. And at Gettysburg, Northern and Southern troops were not waging war against a foreign empire. The combatants on each side were killing their fellow countrymen.

On June 6, 1944, the first day of the Normandy Invasion called “the Longest Day,” 73,000 Americans participated: 57,500 infantrymen on Normandy's Utah and Omaha beaches plus 15,500 airborne troops—again, about the magnitude of Lee's army. On D-Day, Americans suffered 6,600 casualties with 1,465 killed in action. On the second day alone of the Battle of Gettysburg, the combined casualties of both armies were about 15,200 with 2,600 Johnny Rebs and Billy Yanks dying in just six hours of fighting.

The recently recalculated number of men who died in battle or from disease during the entire four years of the Civil War is now estimated to be 750,000, perhaps even higher — or 2.4 percent of the 1860 census. Translating that 2.4 percent figure of fatalities to the 2010 census, the number would be equivalent to 7.4 million deaths today.

The carnage at Gettysburg becomes more comprehensible by putting it into the context of familiar and recognizable statistics of modern warfare and into the framework of Gainesville venues. The appalling battlefield casualties from those blood-drenched, disputed Pennsylvania grounds — the Wheatfield, Little Round Top, Culp's Hill, Cemetery Hill, Devil's Den, the Peach Orchard, and that mile-long terrain of Pickett's Charge — can, and should, speak to us even 150 years later.

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*Diane Fischler lives in Gainesville and is a member of the Civil War Roundtable of North Florida.*

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