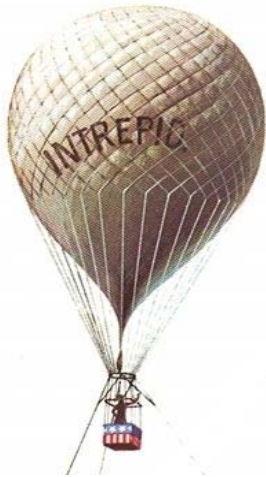
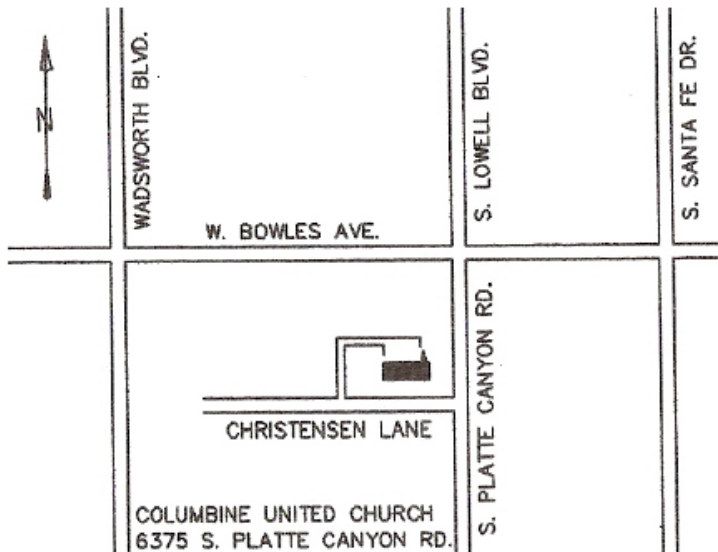




Aerial Gas Observation Balloons Used In the Civil War



Getting good intelligence for fighting has always been a challenge. George Vichot will be talking about military ballooning used prior to and during the Civil War. The Civil War campaigns will focus on those associated with the peninsula battles in the spring of 1862, such as Fort Monroe, Yorktown and Williamsburg. The main balloonist discussed will be Thaddeus Lowe who flew several balloons for the North. The South's activities such as the "Gazelle" in the Seven Days battles will also be covered. Front line intel from balloons for the battles of Seven Pines, Fair Oaks, Gaines' Farm and Mechanicsville, and how the balloons were used as observation and spotter aids will be covered. And lastly, the first aircraft carrier will also be reviewed.



Members begin to gather at 6:00 PM for dinner and discussion about the "War Between the States." Buy plenty of tickets – Ian is sure to have some great books (as always) for this month's meeting. Everyone present will receive one free ticket and additional changes are available at 5 for \$1.00.

As always everyone is encouraged to bring in additional items to sweeten the pot. The drawing will take place at 6:45 PM just prior to the new business portion of the meeting. The presentation will begin promptly at 7:00 PM.

Upcoming Presentations

(Read ahead, share your viewpoints, the roundtable encourages discussion)

December 11 – Aerial Gas Observation
Balloons by George Vichot

January 8, 2009 – Causes of the Civil War
by Mike Lang

February 12, 2009 – John Brown by Nick
Kurtz

March 12 – Close Quarter Combat by Tom
Lux

April 9 – Doddv. Lang at Valverde by
Dennis Potter

May 14 – NEED PRESENTER

June 11 – NEED PRESENTER

July 9 – NEED PRESENTER

August 13 – NEED PRESENTER

September 10 – NEED PRESENTER

October 8 – NEED PRESENTER

November 12 – NEED PRESENTER

December 10 – NEED PRESENTER

President's Message:

"The Greatest Armies of All Time" Part 11 –
The Wehrmacht of WWII

Before I get into my submission this month let me make a few qualifying remarks. I thought long and hard before I decided to write this article. This editorial is in no way an endorsement of Adolf Hitler or the Nazi Regime. It can be little debated that the Nazis are responsible for the worst atrocities committed in the last 100 years. And it should also in no way be construed as an attempt to disrespect any of those brave veterans who fought and died defeating them. It is merely my attempt to look dispassionately at a moment in history and evaluate it in the context of my series; you

the reader will judge if I was able to pull it off.

Although it is technically incorrect, the word *Wehrmacht* is often used to refer specifically to the German Army of the Second World War, as opposed to the Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe.

By Hitler's rise to power in the early 1930's, Germany had a military history that can trace its roots back to the time of Charlemagne. The reform movement of the Prussian Army followed a series of disastrous defeats at the hands of her enemies in the 18th Century. An internal analysis of the lessons learned showed that while individual soldiers were first rate, command structures, staff organization and generalship were not. The army was more dependent on the martial skills of individual members of the German nobility who dominated the military profession. Too often, military talent was brought together only after the nation faced a crisis. There was little effective organizational work between wars. The rise of the German General Staff, an institution that sought to institutionalize military excellence, brought the German Army back from years of atrophy and the humiliation of Napoleon's capture of Berlin. With its new rising class of top notch and world class leaders, the German Army was set on a course of eventual near-total dominance in Europe. This tradition carried the German army well into the 20th century and laid the foundation for its dominance in WWI and WWII and was emulated by every major military power.

In 1937 Germany had a population of 63 million and with that base they were able to field her combined armed force of 18 million. She fought for 8 years, conquering most of Europe, as well as parts of Asia and Africa in the process. In the end it took a large part of the combined manpower and resources of the rest of the free world to defeat her. Although many may be loathe to admit it,

many strategies and tactics the Germans perfected in WWII are used by modern armies. They did not invent the basic concept of the *Blitzkrieg*, but they were the first to add the element of the mechanized unit and the “combined force” as we know it today.

Time and time again during the Western Europe campaign of '44 and '45, the German ability to take worn, disorganized units and form them into a very effective fighting force, often with limited men and equipment, was outstanding. In '44 during operation *Market Garden* they demonstrated this ability better than ever. Several of these ad hoc units triumphed over the elite of the Allied Armies in some of the most desperate fighting of the war. In one infantry battalion that fought at the Arnhem Bridge, members of as many as 28 different units were brought together and led by a German officer with a wooden leg. These men were drawn from every branch of the service, and only 24 hours before had never met one another. This example is testament to the German military tradition and prowess. But sadly, we may never be able to separate these military accomplishments from the evil that the Nazis perpetrated on the world.

To be continued...

Letter from the Front

Stuart Lawrence, a member of our roundtable, is currently serving in Afganastan. The following is a recent letter from him.

Dear Family and Friends,

I was finally able to take a half-day off today and I'm trying to catch up on my “Greetings From Afghanistan Return Tour”.

We left Fort Bragg on Halloween about 1500. We flew to Shannon, Ireland but couldn't drink a damn beer, in Ireland, of all

places! Then we flew to Baku, Azerbaijan. The airport security manager did not allow 300 heavily armed Americans off the plane. Too bad, since they had a great gift shop according to the flight attendants! We left and arrived in Manas, Kyrgyzstan on 1 November. The weather was cold and clear and we were briefed to death with all of the dos and don'ts. Manas is an Air Force base but there were more Army and Marines there than Air Force. The next morning, the Dining Facility ran out of most breakfast items and the Air Force personnel whined loudly. Ain't war hell?

Our flights were scheduled for the 3rd but we left on the 6th. We had to use the cool Air Force gym, the massage parlor, the Green Bean coffee bar and the wireless recreation center. Yeah, the Air Force were very glad to see us go. We landed at night in Bagram to avoid any Taliban that may have wanted to fire at a US aircraft. For those of you that have experienced rough turbulence on commercial aircraft, you would really enjoy the ride. The C-17, loaded with 200 personnel and three pallets of gear, dropped straight down into the Bagram valley and touched down so quickly that your stomach got to meet your heart for about 10 seconds. Glad I didn't eat a late meal. We walked from the plane into a tent (very appropriate for the Army) and got more briefings. By now, we would shoot Bill Gates and his damn Power Point slides.

We left the terminal and dragged our duffle bags down the road to our really cool plywood buildings called B-Huts. (U.S. Central Command standards of temporary housing and allows for the building of B-huts on base, not to show permanence, but to raise the standard for troops serving in Afghanistan). Not to show permanence?? Who is kidding who? We will be here for the next 25 years? Think a plywood B-Hut (cheap for the current tax-payer but must be

replaced by the future tax-payer) will last 25 years?

Okay, I'll get off the soapbox, but on average, B-huts house up to six to eight people, with 16-20 in the tent. The Army says the B-hut comes with a little more breathing room. Most of the tents are 16 by 32 feet where the B-Huts are 18 by 36 feet. I don't see any damn generals or civilian contractors living in them in they are so damn great...

From 6 Nov to 16 Nov, we went through a RIP (Relief in Place) with the Left Seat/Right Seat coordination with the outgoing unit. Try learning a job that the left seater performed in 9 months and you, in the right seat, have 10 days to absorb everything. On 16 Nov, we had a TOA (Transfer of Authority – the old Change of Command). We came to work on 17 Nov, ready to surge ahead on our own. Everyone was glad to claim their own working space and living space (two hours to clean up the B-Hut)!

My day starts at 0530 with a brisk walk of 50 yards to the conex type latrine and shower. The mornings have ranged from 30 to 20 degrees, depending upon the wind. Don't forget the dust, too. The shower facilities have a lot to be desired, considering the building is metal and the outside temps make metal cold. The hot water is too hot to regulate with the Pakistani-made showerheads. After a quick walk back to the B-Hut, I get dressed and walk 500 yards to the Dining Facility. The food is great and the walk back settles a great breakfast. The duty day starts at 0700.

My job consists of briefings, meetings, meetings to plan briefings and more briefings of the meetings we just had. I also do the planning for the convoys to the various sites in our provinces of Parwan and Kapisa. The weather will slow us down about the end of November so convoys will

be minimal very soon. I send up to higher headquarters well-written reports on several subjects that few read. They have a power point daily, which is like "show and tell" in elementary school. The 101st Airborne runs Bagram and everyone tries to outdo each other in their power points to please the General. It's a great way to win the war – "Death by power-point".

Did I mention the dust? It is great and sticks with you from your daily shower to bedtime. Wonder why the Afghans only live to their early 60s? They burn tires for heat and we drive diesel trucks and HMMWVs without converters. Wonder why I cough all of the time. Anyone remember reading "Great Expectations" about 1840 London? History/Literature does repeat itself.

The bazaar here is not as robust as the one at Camp Eggers last year. There are several vendors but they all sell the same rugs, scarves, wooden jewelry boxes, "authentic Henry-Martini" Khyber Pass rifles and all kind of Chinese-made electronics that have a short life span, usually from the bazaar to your room. Also there are several jewelers with the best rocks in Afghanistan. I just didn't know that all of these gems were native to the 'stan.

My mailing address is:

Stuart Lawrence

PARWAN PRT

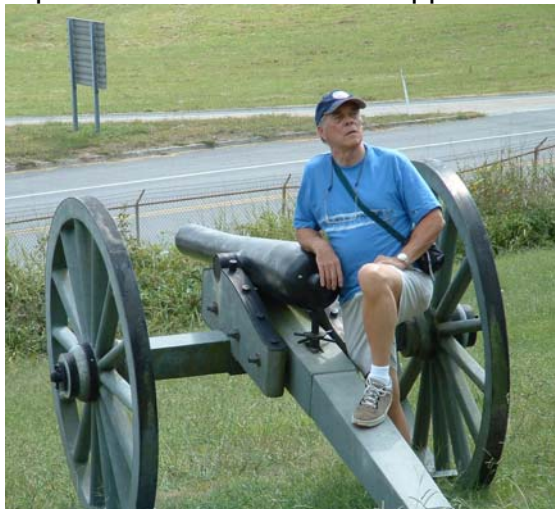
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Hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving and I will write more next week.

STUART

Money for sale

The late Frank Ludeman, an active member our group lost in 2007, had among his effects a Confederate \$50 note. Accompanying the note is a receipt indicating that he had paid \$97.50 for it. Frank's widow, Jeanette, is willing to sell the note to a RMCWRT member for \$50. Several fake notes were also with the original note, and Jeanette is willing to simply give those to whoever buys the real currency. For more information, please contact Nick Kurtz at: ShilohNick@msn.com. A photo of Frank Ludeman appears below.



Symposium update:

Mark October 4, 2009 on your calendar for the next symposium. The theme will be Lee's two invasions of the north. Speakers are:

- Russell Beatie
- Ted Alexander
- Bradley Gottfried
- Lance Herdegen
- Timothy B. Smith

More to come

Treasurer's Report

At this time we have \$2,905.89 in our checking account. We have one account into which all proceeds are deposited and

from which all bills are paid. Next year I will break down our different income streams and track them. For instance, the Symposium will be one.

As December arrives, please consider paying your dues for 2009. Dues are \$20.00 per year and get each paid-up member a copy of the monthly newsletter. For those who do not pay dues, while you are still welcome to attend our monthly meetings, you will not receive a newsletter after the March 2009 edition. When you pay your dues please let me know if you have had a change of mailing address, telephone number, or email address so that all of these may be kept current. – Larry

Dave A.'s Maunderings

Patriotic Civil War Tokens – Part 2

Some of the designs used on Patriotic Civil War Tokens were close imitations of other coins of the times, while others were eclectic, to say the least! One major type of these pieces appears to have been taken from the front of the \$3 gold piece issued by the U.S. Mint from 1854 to 1889. This type is shown below on the left, and was also featured in last month's article. Another major type greatly resembles the familiar Indian Head Penny most of us have seen before. See the photo below, right, for a token of this design.



A couple of unusual and inventive designs are shown below. The star design (left) has an unknown source, while the second (right) image is a unique take-off on the frequently used “Not One Cent” design. The latter design was produced in many similar formats, with the idea being that the existing U.S. counterfeiting law could be circumvented by simply saying on its face that the token was not “One Cent,” as appeared on the back of the Indian Head Penny design. On many remaining examples of this design, though, the word “Not” has been scratched out! Here, though, we see “I O. U. One Cent”, which is certainly creative!



Now we come to my favorite Civil War Token, shown below. The heavy counter stamp “1903” (with the “1” upside-down) appears on an 1863 token with the common motto “Army & Navy”. Since the word “Navy” is covered by the counter stamp, it seems likely that the owner was with the Army, though on which side cannot be known today. Since these tokens circulated almost exclusively in the North, my best speculation is that this token traveled with a Union veteran to one of the many 40th anniversary events that took

place in 1903. Was this token then at Gettysburg? Or perhaps at Vicksburg?



This token appeared on eBay, and evidently no one else was interested or made the likely connection to an anniversary event, as I obtained it for my minimum bid of only five bucks! Many of these tokens are available, typically in the range from \$10 to \$25 for one in decent condition, which should place them well within the means of most people – try your local coin store, or check out eBay under Civil War Patriotic Tokens. One of these makes an interesting, and highly portable, Civil War memento.

Next month we’ll take our final look at Civil War Patriotic Tokens, dealing with a famous incident that took place early in the War. Meanwhile, kudos to Brad Edwards for catching my error last month in the fact that our current pennies are made of copper-clad zinc, not aluminum.

Points of Contact

President, Mike Lang	720-840-1416
Treasurer, Larry Peterson	303-674-1740
Newsletter, Dave Townsend	303-973-0549

e-mail: RockyMtnCWRT@aol.com
 website: www.RockyMtnCivilWarRT.com

Message group home page:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockyMtnCWRT>

To subscribe to message group, send an email to:
RockyMtnCWRT-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

December Issue Submission Deadline: Nov 30