

THE PRITCHARD PRESS

The Newsletter of the General Benjamin Pritchard, Camp 20, Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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GEN. BENJ. D. PRITCHARD

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Our Purpose

As Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), we are the legal heirs to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Our goal and purpose is to perpetuate the memory of the GAR; what they did in the Civil War and to preserve the Union, and to continue the work they started following the War. Teaching others about our flag, patriotism and citizenship were important to them and should be important to us all. Learning about the other cultures and histories that live among us today is important, but the basic history of the United States cannot take second place to that of others.

We are a National organization divided into Departments (States) and then Camps (local chapters). While perpetuating the memory of the GAR, we also work actively to locate and record the final resting place of all Civil War soldiers as well as work to restore and or preserve Civil War memorials. We also seek to honor the veterans of all wars. We participate in Memorial Day services as well as those on Veterans' Day.



Announcements

- ❖ Brother Tom Bruce advises that a rededication ceremony is planned for the family of Aquilla Carey Pvt Co H 102nd U.S.C.I at the Robinson Cemetery in Gobles, MI. The ceremony is scheduled for Saturday Sept. 17th at 1:00 pm. A program will be circulated in early September, prior to the event, to provide specific details. The cemetery is located on M40 at the corner of 20th St. approximately 1 mile south of Gobles. Your attendance and support of this event is appreciated.

Camp Calendar

- ❖ [September 2011](#)
6th, 7 pm: Camp Meeting-
Huntington Run Clubhouse
- ❖ [October 2011](#)
4th, 7 pm: Camp Meeting-Portage
Library
- ❖ [November 2011](#)

1st, 7 pm: Camp Meeting-Portage
Library
8th, Election Day
11th, Veterans Day
19th, Remembrance Day at
Gettysburg

Camp Happenings

Brothers Gary Gibson and Bill Costello placed three grave stones in the GAR lot at Riverside cemetery on September 1, 2011. They had placed an additional two grave stones earlier in the summer.



Civil War Trivia Question

Question: What was the first significant union victory in which not a man was lost in combat?

Answer: See page 8

Quote of the Month

“It appears we have appointed our worst generals to command forces, and our most gifted and brilliant to edit newspapers! In fact, I discovered by reading newspapers that these editor/geniuses plainly saw all my strategic defects from the start, yet failed to inform me until it was too late. Accordingly, I’m readily willing to yield my command to these obviously superior intellects, and I’ll, in turn, do my best for the Cause by writing editorials – after the fact.”

Robert E. Lee, 1863



Our Heritage

First Bull Run (First Manassas):

“End of Illusion”

The First Battle of Bull Run (as it was known in the north) or First Battle of Manassas (as it was called by the south) was the first major land battle of the Civil War. Prior to the battle, which was fought on July 21, 1861, both sides harbored many strongly held illusions that were forever shattered by the battle. Many in the north had a romantic vision of war and were convinced that the war issues were a crusade and would be resolved by the first battle when overwhelming Union might would inevitably prevail. Many early regiments, as a consequence, were formed for only 90 days. Southerners, on the other hand believed that one Confederate soldier was the equal to ten Union soldiers. The antebellum south, from their perspective, was a superior culture; aristocratic, better educated in general and in the military arts specifically and could not fail in prevailing over a decadent northern society of shop keepers, laborers and immigrants. All of these illusions were erased by the bloody reality of war and the carnage of the First Battle of Bull Run.



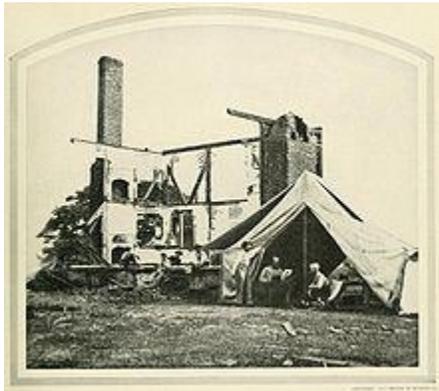
Brig. General Irvin McDowell had been appointed by President Abraham Lincoln to command of the armies stationed in the Washington DC area. This initial army was designated the Army Northeastern Virginia. McDowell was immediately beset by the President, the Congress and the northern press to end the war quickly with one decisive victory. Therefore, with major misgivings he bowed to the political pressure and marched his army of 35,000 westward out of Washington in the sweltering heat of July 16, 1861. Waiting for him was the Confederate Army of the Potomac of 22,000 men under the command of General P. G. T. Beauregard who were encamped at Manassas Junction 25 miles west of Washington. Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston also arrived with an additional 9000 men in the Confederate Army of the Shenandoah.

McDowell’s initial battle plan was well conceived and he attempted to out flank Beauregard by attacking his left flank. The initial battle went well for the Union forces and they made significant progress in pushing back the troops under Beauregard and Johnston. However, the mid day arrival of Confederate Brig. General Thomas J. Jackson as well as Col. Wade Hampton and Col. J. E. B. Stuart began to check the Union advance and ultimately turned the tide of battle. This is where Jackson’s resolute defense earned him the nick name “Stonewall”. By late afternoon the Union’s organized retreat turned into a route. The roads back to Washington were clogged by civilians and government officials who had

come to picnic and watch the Union victory. Many of the dead were civilians. In total over 5000 casualties were reported on both sides.

Michigan at Bull Run

Michigan troops were engaged in much of the fighting at First Bull Run and earned a reputation as some of the most ferocious fighters of the war. The First Michigan, under Colonel Orlando Willcox, recaptured an artillery battery from the Confederates. Willcox was wounded and captured during a desperate fight. The Second and Third Michigan, under General Israel Richardson (Fighting Dick) fought their way to the Henry house where they confronted Jackson's troops.



Ruins of the Henry House after the battle

Another Michigan bred general, Henry J. Hunt, brilliantly covered the retreat with his battery of artillery. Finally, Congressman John A. Logan fought at Bull Run as an unattached volunteer in a Michigan Regiment.

The most important impact of the First Battle of Bull Run was the sudden

realization in both the north and south that this was an apocalyptic event which meant that the war would be a long and bloody affair. There would be no quick decisive event that would resolve the long simmering issues that divided the country.

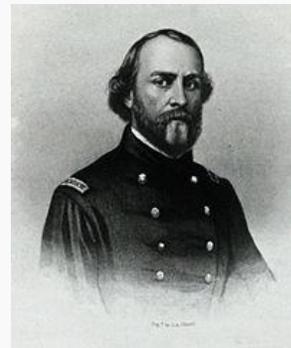


History

Sullivan Ballou

Sullivan Ballou

March 28, 1829 – July 28, 1861 (aged 32)



Lithograph of Sullivan Ballou

In September of 1990 PBS first aired Ken Burns documentary, *The Civil War*. This series became immensely popular with the American

public. However, at the end of the first episode of the series Paul Roebling's reading of a letter, written by an obscure Major, Sullivan Ballou, from Rhode Island to his wife Sarah created a sensation and captivated his audience.

Born March 28, 1829 in Smithfield, R.I., Ballou was educated at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass.; Brown University in Providence, R.I. and the National Law School in Ballston, N.Y. He was admitted to the Rhode Island Bar in 1853.

Ballou devoted his brief life to public service. He was elected in 1854 as clerk of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, later serving as its speaker. He married Sarah Hart Shumway on October 15, 1855, and the following year saw the birth of their first child, Edgar. A second son, William, was born in 1859.

Ballou immediately entered the military in 1861 after the war broke out. He became judge advocate of the Rhode Island militia and was 32 at the time of his death at the first Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861.

Ballou and 93 of his men were mortally wounded at Bull Run. In an attempt to better direct his men, Ballou took a horse mounted position in front of his regiment, when a 6-pounder solid shot from Confederate artillery tore off his right leg and simultaneously killed his horse. The badly injured Major was then carried off the field and the remainder of his leg was amputated. Ballou died from his wound a week after that Union defeat and was buried in the yard of nearby Sudley Church. After the battle the territory was occupied by Confederate forces. According to witness testimony, it was at this time that Ballou's corpse was exhumed, decapitated, and desecrated by Confederate soldiers possibly belonging to the 21st Georgia regiment. Ballou's body was never recovered



July 14, 1861

Camp Clark, Washington

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days—perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more . . .

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American Civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing—perfectly willing—to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt . . .

Sarah my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battle field.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them for so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood, around

us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me—perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have often times been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness . . .

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights . . . always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again

Sullivan

...

Sullivan Ballou was killed a week later at the first Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861.

Ironically, Sullivan Ballou's letter was never mailed. Although Sarah would receive other, decidedly more upbeat letters, dated after the now-famous letter from the battlefield, the letter in question would be found among Sullivan Ballou's effects when Gov. William Sprague of Rhode Island traveled to Virginia to retrieve the remains of his state's sons who had fallen in battle.

When he died, his wife was 24. She later moved to New Jersey to live out her life with her son, William, and never re-married. She died at age 80 in 1917.

Sullivan and Sarah Ballou are buried next to each other at Swan Point Cemetery in

Providence, RI. There are no known living descendants.



Sullivan Ballou's grave marker

If you would like to hear the original Ken Burns recording of Sullivan's letter to Sarah recited please click on or copy to your browser the You Tube site below.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa2hv8U8cWU>



The letter of Sullivan Ballou was written before the Battle of First Bull Run and reflected the romantic notion of war prevalent up to that point. After the battle Confederate soldier J. W. Reid had "seen the elephant" and had gained a much more realistic view of the horrors of battle and wrote the following letter home.

The Letters of J.W. Reid

Private J.W. Reid of the 4th South Carolina Infantry wrote several letters to his family between July 23 and July 30, 1861, from the vicinity of the first Manassas battlefield. The following is a compilation of four letters excerpted from Reid's book, History of the Fourth Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers (pp. 23-28), first published in 1891 and

reprinted in 1975 by the Morningside Bookshop, Dayton, Ohio.

I scarcely know how to begin, so much has transpired since I wrote you last; but thank God I have come through it all safe, and am now here to try and tell you something about the things that have just happened. As you have already been informed, we were expecting a big fight. It came; it is over; the enemy is gone. I cannot give you an idea of the terrors of this battle. I believe that it was as hard a contested battle as was ever fought on the American continent, or perhaps anywhere else. For ten long hours it almost seemed that heaven and earth was coming together; for ten long hours it literally rained balls, shells, and other missiles of destruction. The firing did not cease for a moment. Try to picture yourself at least one hundred thousand men, all loading and firing as fast as they could. It was truly terrific. The cannons, although they make a great noise, were nothing more than pop guns compared with the tremendous thundering noise of the thousands of muskets. The sight of the dead, the cries of the wounded, the thundering noise of the battle, can never be put to paper. It must be seen and heard to be comprehended. The dead, the dying and the wounded; friend and foe, all mixed up together; friend and foe embraced in death; some crying for water; some praying their last prayers; some trying to whisper to a friend their last farewell message to their loved ones at home. It is heartrending. I cannot go any further. Mine eyes are damp with tears. Although the fight

is over the field is yet quite red with blood from the wounded and the dead. I went over what I could of the battlefield the evening after the battle ended. The sight was appalling in the extreme. There were men shot in every part of the body. Heads, legs, arms, and other parts of human bodies were lying scattered all over the battlefield.

I gave you the particulars of our fight as best I could under existing circumstances. I still have a strong presentiment that I will be home again, some time. It may be a good while, and there is no telling at present what I may have to go through before I come, if I do come, only that I will have to encounter war and its consequences.

Yours as ever,
J.W. Reid



Trivia Question Answer: The capture of Island No. 10, in the Mississippi River, April 7, 1862.

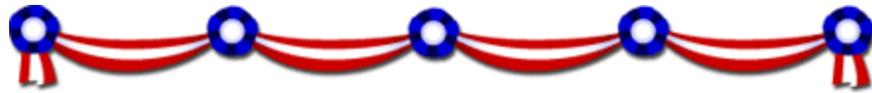


Photo of the Month



Members of the 3rd Regiment Massachusetts Heavy Artillery while at Fort Totten