

## **BRUNSWICK CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

**MEETING – September 1, 2015**

**SHILOH—BLOODY APRIL –6-7, 1862**

**SPEAKER: Wiley Sword**

Wiley Sword published his first book on Shiloh in 1974. It is a TEN in the best sense of the word. Both scholarly and critically acclaimed, it is heavy stuff and his wife hopes it doesn't mean reading 10 pages will make you nod off. It was called (rightfully) Bloody April. From Columbus in 1492 to April 1862 no more blood was spilled than at Shiloh. You have heard it called the "Pearl Harbor" of the Civil War. This connection is about the many eye witness accounts as well as expanding volumes of controversy surrounding the Battle of Pittsburg Landing. Just like Pearl, the surprise attack on Grant's Army of over 67,000 by Albert Sidney Johnston's lesser force of 45,000 was massive. Casualties of this magnitude had never happened before. Union losses were over 20% and Confederate losses topped 25%

U.S. Grant's role becomes central. He is on crutches after a fall from his horse. His thinking is clouded and confused. His Army is on the edge of disaster. He "goofs" and falls back in the wrong direction. The Confederates also become confused and follow Grant's men toward Pittsburg Landing where a Union position on a sunken road nicknamed the "Hornets' Nest" (plural) was defended by many Union Hornets. Prentiss and Wallace's divisions provide critical time for the Union lines to stabilize. Wallace is mortally wounded and Prentiss is eventually surrounded and captured. General Albert Johnston "bleeds out" from a leg wound that gets an artery. Ya just had to be there to relive his final astonishing words. He is shot by a ball delivered by an Enfield Rifle. They were used almost exclusively by the South.

Other unexpected outcomes involve charges of mismanagement issues that made it to Lincoln. Ironically, Shiloh eventually saves U. S. Grant's career. Was it destiny or just luck that only Randall Gibson's Brigade turned the tide at the "Nest?" History now strongly suggests that the demise of the 1<sup>ST</sup> Arkansas brigade was just plain slaughter. A long lost diary by a soldier, named Haden, offers many insightful observations. We find that some abandoned Confederate pork fed hungry Union troops. Sooo, scour your attics, look in weird places (like your Grandfather's old stamp collection) because Wiley Sword is sure "The full story of Shiloh will never be told. Had a tired Bearegard fought on reinforcements from Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio would not have allowed Grant to counterattack the next day and change the history books !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

By Dan Fink