



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - MIKE POWELL



There is an old saying that you do not miss something until it is gone. That is so relevant these days...I miss our BCWRT meetings!

I wish I could positively say that we will be able to meet again in September, but that is simply impossible to guarantee at this juncture.

By now, my suspicion is that many of you who are looking for some Civil War history have found a significant dose of it on the internet. See an article on page 5 for some suggested sites. I would also urge you to visit our Facebook page — <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/> — where you'll find Advisor Katy Menne's suggested links to a host of educational Civil War sites. I cannot thank Katy enough for her Herculean efforts to keep us informed.

I really do not have anything else to say, so, I will keep this mercifully short. Stay safe, take care of yourselves and I sincerely *HOPE* we'll meet in September!

Mike

Editor's Note: Mike's wish that we take care of ourselves during this pandemic might cause us to reflect on the infectious diseases faced by Union and Confederate soldiers. This abstract sums up their plight:

The American Civil War represents a landmark in military and medical history as the last large-scale conflict fought without knowledge of the germ theory of disease. Unsound hygiene, dietary deficiencies, and battle wounds set the stage for epidemic infection, while inadequate information about disease causation greatly hampered disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Pneumonia, typhoid, diarrhea/dysentery, and malaria were the predominant illnesses. Altogether, two-thirds of the approximately 660,000 deaths of soldiers were caused by uncontrolled infectious diseases, and epidemics played a major role in halting several major campaigns. These delays, coming at a crucial point early in the war, prolonged the fighting by as much as two years.

Dr. Jeffrey S. Sartin (Mayo Clinic), "Infectious Diseases During the Civil War: The Triumph of the 'Third Army'," *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Vol 16, Issue 4, April 1993.

Our June meeting is cancelled. (For our newer members, the June meeting is always held the last Tuesday in May due to the unavailability of Hatch Auditorium the first week of June.) Our earliest possible next meeting is Tuesday, September 1.

Ladies' Department — *By Charen Fink*

At this time, we are struggling with the pandemic of Covid-19, replete with food shortages along with other inconveniences, deaths and isolation. During the Civil War in North Carolina, there were similar shortages and inconveniences, albeit not quite the same as our present-day situation, as today there is an unprecedented loss of life.

Herewith are some of the shortages and inconveniences North Carolina struggled with to survive. Survival in the central Piedmont was difficult; food was often stolen or the inhabitants had to hoard what little they could produce. There was total destitution in the mountain counties and the coastal areas were stripped bare.

Food, clothing, medicine, paper, housing, and transportation were all a main concern. Even



social interaction was afflicted.

Just as our virus today affects differently from one county to another, so did the hardships of war affect our counties unevenly. City dwellers felt the pinch of hunger sooner than their rural cousins. In

the spring of 1863, a Confederate taxation program obligated a farm family to turn over 10 percent of its production of everything — potatoes, oats, corn, rice, beans, bacon, beef, hides, everything — to the Confederate government.

To rich planters, the tax was a nuisance; to small farmers the effect was devastating. Speculation, falling production due to manpower, and equipment shortages had an effect on everyone. With all the young men gone, the women, old folks, and children took on all the tasks. If tools and animals wore out, they could not be replaced. Fortunately for the state, Governor Vance hoarded supplies and tried to distribute them evenly.

As happens in times of shortages, it was the poor who felt the pain first, longest, and hardest. President Davis' family managed to dine on roasted chicken, fresh oysters, olives, champagne, lettuce salad, and chocolate ice cream. Judah Benjamin and Stephen Mallory did not maintain their legendary girths on a diet of parched corn and goober peas!

Women were forced to manage plantations and small farms and took their pay in raw wool.



After their daytime tasks, they worked the wool by candlelight to make clothing for their families. The women formed sewing societies, knitting clubs, hospital aid societies, and nursing associations. All were unpaid jobs.

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Ladies' Department - (Continued from page 3)

The ladies in all the towns across the state did their share to help the war effort.

Improvisation and substitutions were in order. Soap was made from a combination of meat



scraps, bones, skins, and lye, boiled down and mixed with ashes. It scrubbed the dirt off but drew flies on a warm day. Old clothes were refurbished and homespun was made in every Confederate state. One-thousand corset stays from Scotland sold for a

profit of 1,100 percent!

North Carolina was one of the few states that maintained their public education system. There were paper shortages, but to be sure, it did not

include toilet paper because it was not in use at that time. Pork was the first meat to become scarce and after that was beef. Fats of all kinds became scarce and the South had paid little attention to the production of butter. Cornmeal became a common flour substitute.

Coffee was always more popular than tea. In the coastal areas “yaupon tea” was made. By 1865 a pound of bacon cost \$7.50 up from 33 cents and a barrel of flour \$500 up from \$18.

In comparison to what we are currently experiencing, the people of North Carolina during the war fared worst; so perhaps, aside from the inordinate loss of life today, our ancestors did not fare very well during the war.

Reference

**Trotter, William R. *Silk Flags and Cold Steel*.
John F. Blair, Publisher: Winston-Salem,
North Carolina, 1988, pgs. 127-143.**

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AmazonSmile - Shop and Donate to BCWRT

For members who use Amazon, a reminder that you may shop and help the BCWRT at the same time!

Thanks to the AmazonSmile program, 0.5% of the purchase price for eligible products is donated to a charitable organization of your choice — hopefully BCWRT!



A reminder that our name in the AmazonSmile system is “Brunswick Civil War Roundtable,” the ‘round table’ being combined into one word.

To participate, members should go to the AmazonSmiles website (<https://smile.amazon.com>) and follow the easy steps to begin shopping and giving a percentage of their sales to BCWRT.

Civil War Sites for Stimulation

Mike Powell hopes many of us are searching the internet, looking for sites that discuss some aspect of America’s “Late Unpleasantness.” Here are just a few sites that might get you started on learning more about the conflict that still captivates us nearly 160 years later.

The number one recommended site: BCWRT’s Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/>. Katy Menne keeps the site current with a variety of links to nationally recognized historical organizations, including the American Battlefield Trust - <https://www.battlefields.org/about>. You do not need to be a Facebook user to access BCWRT’s site. Also, Katy’s workplace, the NC Maritime museum at Southport, offers a wide array of programs for younger and adult Civil War history fans - <https://ncmaritimemuseumsouthport.com>. She notes, “We have created ways to bring this difficult subject to life for even the smallest patron.”

Check out Gettysburg College Civil War Institute’s biweekly Zoom conversations: <https://www.gettysburg.edu/civil-war-institute/events/>. Topics are very appealing.

The Civil War Round Table Congress has lined up a series of interesting Zoom lectures, featuring qualified historians, speaking on a host of captivating topics. “Seating” is limited, so if interested, strongly suggest you quickly visit their website to sign up – <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html#> [May need to copy and paste into your browser.]

The Mariners’ Museum and Park, located in Newport News, Va, continues its excellent Civil War lectures via YouTube LIVE. For the topics and schedule, please visit their link – https://mcusercontent.com/4ed2502d26ff277723afd52f5/files/albed664-55f2-45c4-8c60-217646b3c3d8/YoutubeLive_JVQ_1_1_.pdf



PRINT RAFFLE RESCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER



A quick reminder that our raffle for one of three framed prints will be drawn at our November meeting. Tickets will again be sold at our first three meetings of the 2020-21 program year. Tickets are one for \$2; three for \$5; or seven for \$10. The winner selects his/her choice. Shown this month is Lafayette Ragsdale’s “Wizard of the Saddle” (without framing). All monies raised go for our mission of education and battlefield preservation.

It's All Relative

Being a member of the BCWRT is special for many of you — your relative participated in the Civil War! Members **Brenda and Bob Hagerman** are in charge of sharing your unique stories. From time-to-time, *Call to Arms* will feature a capsulized view of a family's Civil War history. You may also visit our website (http://brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com/member_relatives%20) for expanded stories. If you've not done so already, please contact the Hagermans to tell of your family's Civil War involvement: **910-854-0326**, or b_hagerman@msn.com.

Wiley Cain of Cumberland County, North Carolina, was BCWRT member Al Rose's son-in-law Daniel Westley Edge's four times great



grandfather. He was born April 1, 1828, and when he enlisted he was married and a father of six children.

He signed up along with 15 Cain relatives from Bladen

County, NC, in the "Bladen Stars" and was present or accounted for with the Bladen Stars Battery of the 36 Regiment of NC Troops (2nd Regiment of NC Artillery). The Bladen Stars Battery was considered an independent company for coastal defense and special projects. Members were from a number of counties in eastern North Carolina, including Cumberland, New Hanover, Brunswick and Bladen.

Wiley fought in the first battle of Fort Fisher on August 23, 1863, and afterwards was transferred to "E" Battery in the same regiment on July 18, 1864. He served with "E" Battery during the second battle of Fort Fisher on December 24-25, 1864, and was captured when Fort Fisher fell on January 15, 1865. He was taken prisoner, first at Point Lookout, Maryland, and then survived Camp Elmira in New York.

His case is interesting in that he was apparently permitted to go home at some point as he fathered another child in 1864. He was released on June 30, 1865, after signing the required Oath of Allegiance. He returned home to raise his family, survived his first wife, remarried, had two more children with his much younger bride. He died around 1907.

It is believed that Wiley Cain was a descendant of Revolutionary War veteran James Cain (1752-1835) who married at Harmony Hall in Bladen County, NC, the home of Colonel Richardson, acting Justice of the Peace.

Fast Facts - In October 1862 Federals and Confederates collided during a search for water. The ensuing Battle of Perryville resulted in more than seventy-six hundred casualties.

During the siege of Petersburg, ovens at the Union base in City Point, Virginia, churned out 123,000 loaves of soft bread every twenty-four hours.

(Cited in Thomas Flagel's "The History Buff's Guide to the Civil War.")

Leadership Leanings

The BCWRT leadership team consists of five officers and four directors, who collectively constitute the Board of Directors, all of whom are elected by the membership. The names of the officers and board members are listed each month on the last page of our newsletter. We thought it would be of interest if you knew more about these men and women who you've entrusted to lead the largest round table in the

country. We asked each to tell a little about themselves, or explain their interest in the Civil War, or describe how they become involved in BCWRT, or discuss what they do for our organization. This month we conclude with the remaining four members of the leadership team, helping you put a face to a name, and hopefully better understanding their commitment to our round table.

CHAREN FINK - Director since Day One;
Vice President since Oct 2016

My interest in the Civil War began in the eighth grade and was solidified while a high school sophomore when my date (my husband-to-be years later) took me to meet his father. He introduced me to his collection of rare Civil War books. That piqued my lifelong interest. My husband Dan's great grandfather was a Union veteran having gone from Ohio and enlisted in Iowa.

In 1982, the Mahoning Valley Civil War Round Table was formed and I became a charter member. In the ensuing years I became vice-president, moving up to president. A requirement for the position was giving a presentation to the roundtable which, in my case, was about the involvement of women.

In 1997, Hugh Earnhart, founder of the group, asked me to write something for the newsletter about women. He said put in something about cooking, clothing, etc.

I got carried away and included so much more, always about women and their social history. Before that began, I had started speaking to various groups (or whoever would listen) about the Civil War. My first re-enactment was in Mesopotamia, Ohio, and once again it reinforced my desire to continue with developing programs to present. I secured a dressmaker at the re-enactment and bought my first outfit. For those

who are unaware of securing a period-correct outfit, one must be fitted first for that ubiquitous corset. It produces a smooth visual line.



If I was going to represent my foremothers, it had to be in period correct clothing. From there I went to a conference in Gettysburg for women to learn more about women's social history. Beth Miller Hall at that conference began making my ball gowns, dinner gown, and day dresses.

By the time I gathered all my underpinnings (underwear), dresses, and accessories I was about out of money. Now it became necessary to start charging for these talks much to my dismay. I have spoken to various groups and round tables all over the country, been to many balls and re-enactments. All in all, a wonderful experience.

The more information I accrued the more programs I needed to develop. Now there are

(Continued next page)

Leadership Leanings - Continued

fifteen of these presentations available, especially since my granddaughter taught me how to use power point!

In 2010, I was selected as a charter director for BCWRT and became vice president in October 2016. I started the newsletter and have continued writing the *Ladies' Department* column. In addition, I write a similar piece for the Ohio roundtable. In 2013, having attended several of Wally's forums following a roundtable meeting, the idea came to me to try a Ladies' Forum. The BCWRT provided much support for me allowing

a budget for this endeavor. The attendance at the first meeting (initially we met twice a year) was forty-five; six months later we had 99 attendees. Now we meet yearly with an average attendance of 140.

Added to all this I was appointed advisor of women's studies to the North Carolina Civil War History Center in Fayetteville. Additional activities include membership to the 290 Foundation's study of Civil War maritime women, concluding with membership in various Civil War related organizations plus a World War II history group in Youngstown, Ohio. I really am not hawkish!

GAR DOWELL - Vice President since 2020

Gettysburg! I have met many people whose first Civil War experience was Gettysburg. My own adventure started when I was about ten years old and my family stopped at Gettysburg during one of our many family trips. While I still remember my first views of the copse of trees, the vast expanse of Pickett's Charge, and Devil's Den, it was the magnificent Gettysburg Cyclorama that really stoked my interest.



Back home, I found a copy of Edward Stackpole's *They Met at Gettysburg* in the sale table at Walden's Books. I avidly read it cover-to-cover, then introduced myself to Bruce Catton's Civil War trilogies – *The Army of the Potomac* and *The Centennial History of the Civil War*. From there, Walden's Books, the Book of the Month Club, and, later, Barnes and Noble's were mainstays in building my library.

Moving to Maryland from New York State opened up new opportunities to explore the Civil War. Living in the Baltimore area, Gettysburg, Antietam, and Bull Run became weekend excursions to see and study the battlefields up close and personal.

Thirteen years ago, we moved to the Southport area and I was told about the Brunswick Civil War Roundtable and its great speakers. Nine years later, after finally retiring, I attended my first meeting, joined immediately, and have been a member since. The BCWRT has been an endless surprise to me in the breadth and depth of new knowledge on my favorite historical topic.

KATHY O'DONNELL - Director since 2016

My late husband, Tom, was one the co-founders of the Brunswick Civil War Round Table. Over 11 years ago, Tom and Wally Rueckel got talking about starting a round table at a party and they worked hard to make their dream a reality. The first meeting was held at our house and my only contribution was to provide blueberry muffins to the attendees!

I did not get involved with the round table at the beginning as I wanted it to be Tom's thing. I had no interest in wars, much less the Civil War. **(Continued next page)**



Leadership Leanings - Continued

I ended up being more involved as his health issues started getting worse. I did his typing, went with him on several Civil War site trips (where Tom first met Ed Bearss) and joined him at our meetings. I learned a lot about the Civil War through osmosis!

Upon Tom's passing I was approached to join the BCWRT board of directors as an advisor. After much thought, I decided I had to continue Tom's legacy. A year or so later I became a director. I have been very impressed with the direction of our round table. No one who was involved from the beginning had any idea the size that we would become — the largest in the world! Tom would be so proud.

E. Gifford Stack - Director since 2015

Besides enjoying the movies (*Gone with the Wind*), television shows (*The Gray Ghost*), and books (*Red Badge of Courage*), my interest in the Civil War really didn't kick-in until living in Washington, DC, during the last two decades of the twentieth century. I started visiting the battlefields, monuments, and historic sites within a couple of hundred miles of the nation's capital. Each locale seemed more interesting than the last!

But for me the most captivating aspect of the Civil War remains...President Lincoln. Whether it's the Lincoln Memorial I jogged by almost weekly, or Ford's Theater



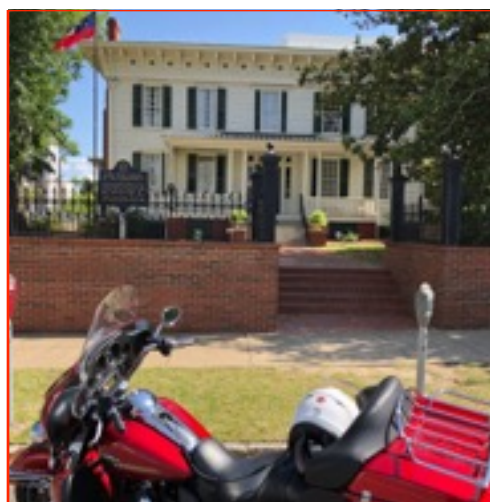
where I sat spell bound looking at the president's box, or the museum in the theater's basement, or the unbelievable Lincoln home, museum, and tomb in Springfield, Illinois, I cannot get enough Lincoln lore. Time and again I've been guilty of wondering, "How would



this (fill in the blank) be different if Lincoln did not die in 1865?"

Since moving to Caswell Beach full-time in 2012, I've enjoyed motorcycle road trips to numerous Civil War sites, some that I've shared in this newsletter, which I've had the privilege of editing since 2017.

My thanks to neighbors Max Williams and Rob Clarke for introducing me to BCWRT. And to Wally Rueckel who interviewed me for two hours before



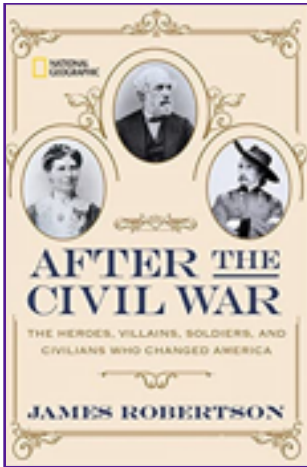
"blessing me" as qualified to serve as a director. Finally, a special appreciation to Mike Powell, who

besides tolerating my suggestions and teasing, is super terrific at securing our speakers and leading our organization. Ride on...

Book Reviews

If you need a good Civil War book to read over the summer, here are several suggestions from BCWRT members.

After the Civil War: The Heroes, Villains, Soldiers, and Civilians Who Changed America, by James "Bud" Robertson, National Geographic, October 2015. *Reviewed by Chuck Roedema*



I highly recommend James Robertson's book entitled, "After the Civil War." While he passed away this past year, we will never forget his visits to our BCWRT....always informative and guaranteed to be entertaining as he captivated his audiences. His

brilliance is reflected in this amazing book

covering stories of 70 key figures who feature prominently in the pivotal postwar years as they changed America. He reveals the fascinating lives of military masterminds and fearless frontiersmen, passionate politicians, and gifted artists.

This is a "read at your leisure" type of book. Put it down anytime since each entry is an easy read, rather brief yet revealing, and most importantly, covering little known facts and anecdotes. Frankly, I believe it will be hard to put the book down when you feel you must tend to other pressing priorities during your hectic daily schedule of "Coronavirus indoor activities."

Lincoln's Lieutenants: The High Command of the Army of the Potomac, by Stephen W. Sears, Mariner Books, 2018. *Reviewed by Jim Medeiros*

As many books as I've read I have never understood how the Confederacy could garner such good generals as Lee and Jackson and yet the Union boasted of such incompetence. This book goes some way toward explaining whys and wherefores, at least with the list of Union generals with such short life expectancies. Note the importance of the subtitle because the focus of this book remains squarely on the parade of general officers through the Army of the Potomac and its predecessor, the Army of Northeastern Virginia. Despite that, many

of the officers from distant theaters took side trips through the Army of the Potomac at one time or another. Sherman, Butler, Sheridan, Kilpatrick, Grant, and Burnside put in an appearance. Sears traces Lincoln's oft stormy relationships with everyone.

From a respected historian, Sears' writing remains accessible and clear and has earned him multiple awards. In giving descriptions of the Army of Potomac's battles and campaigns he excels at making the fog of war transparent. *(See next page)*

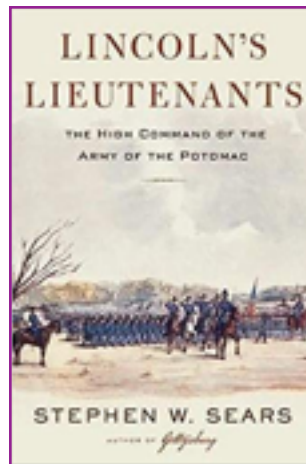
Book Reviews - Continued

All the stumbling and carnage leap from the page as well as the after-battle reports which were often politicized to excuse or accuse the lieutenants for blunders.

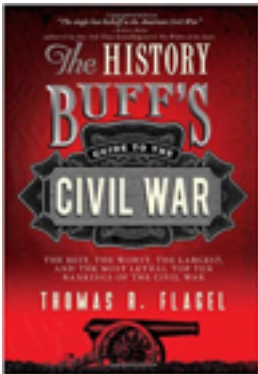
The sad truth that even in war every government action could be politicized then, as now, reassures us that today seems normal and consistent with the past. The other great service Sears provides derives from a nice straight march through all those Potomac conflicts, placing them all in one book in a coherent tale for those of us coming to Civil War history late.

Finally, like many storyteller historians, Sears can give the telling detail that humanizes great men. When Lincoln

reviewed Sherman's troops after First Bull Run, an officer rushed up with a complaint against Sherman, saying that when arguing about the terms of service Colonel Sherman had threatened to shoot the officer as a mutineer. Lincoln in a loud stage whisper heard by all said, "Well, if I were you, and he threatened to shoot, I would not trust him, for I believe he would do it."



The History Buff's Guide to the Civil War, by Thomas Flagel, Cumberland House, 2 edition 2010. *Reviewed by E. Gifford Stack*



If you are a list lover like me, this is your book. Flagel, who was a sub-for-a-sub speaker this January (receiving a rarely given standing ovation from the 450 attendees present), gives a detailed and enjoyable set of facts, stories, 'Top Ten' lists, and unexpected new findings. The book covers politics (Top Ten similarities between Lincoln and Davis), military life (Top Ten weapons), and everything in-between. As noted, the book "will delight and inform you!" Flagel returns to BCWRT next May. Get him to inscribe your copy!

The Widow of the South, by Robert Hicks, Paperback, Grand Central Publishing, reprint edition 2006. *Reviewed by E. Gifford Stack*

This novel is based on the Battle of Franklin which took place late in the war - November 30, 1864. It was not a good day for Confederate General Hood who lost 13 generals killed or wounded, and 7,250 men killed, wounded, or missing...all within five hours! Based on a true story of Carrie McGavock whose home - Carnton plantation - was turned in a Confederate hospital. Carrie is inexplicably drawn to a wounded Southern sergeant. The story ensues beyond the war when her property becomes a private cemetery. Hicks won acclaim for historical accuracy, in this, his first publication.



Civil War Views

The editor of *Call to Arms* asks you share your visits to a Civil War battlefield, monument, park, reenactment, or historical site. Simply email your high resolution photo(s) to egstack@cnsr.com along with the name of the location, date taken, a short caption, and name of photographer.



Clockwise from top left: Jack Carpenter stands in front of Burnside Bridge at Antietam Battlefield. Jack and grandson Hayden pause outside of Antietam's Dunker Church. *(Photos by Jack's son Chris, August 2019.)*

Jim Medeiros and his wife Martha visited the Smith Memorial Arch in Philadelphia this February. Constructed between 1897 and 1912 and costing a half million dollars, the moment honors Pennsylvania's military heroes of the Civil War, including Major Generals Meade, Reynolds, McClellan, and Hancock, as well as Admirals Porter and Dhalgren. The names of eighty-four other Pennsylvania veterans are also recognized. The memorial inscription reads in part, "...when conflict ceased the North with the South united again to enjoy the common heritage left by the fathers of our country..."

(Photos by Jim Medeiros)



MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The May 26 meeting of the BCWRT is CANCELLED.

BCWRT is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, co-founded by Tom O'Donnell and Wally Rueckel, and organized in May 2010.

The BCWRT website, brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com, contains helpful information and is available to everyone, no user name or password required. Our Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/>. Visit both sites to learn of future speakers, trips, and interesting Civil War information.

2020 Officers, Directors, Advisors, and Liaisons

Mike Powell: President & Director	Tom Kehoe: Advisor
Charen Fink: VP, Director & Ladies' Forum Coord.	Paul Laird: Advisor
Gar Dowell: VP, Director	Jim McKee: Advisor
Jennifer Chapman: Secretary & Director	Katy Menne: Advisor
Gary Krupp: Treasurer & Director	Roy Pender: Advisor
John Butler: Director	Leslie Rivers: Advisor
Kathy O'Donnell: Director	Wally Rueckel: Advisor
Chuck Roedema: Director	Lori Sanderlin: Advisor
E. Gifford Stack: Director	Dave Shultz: Advisor
Peter Carmichael: Advisor	Wade Sokolosky: Advisor
Jack Carpenter: Advisor & Ft. Anderson Liaison	Peter Whalen: Advisor
Chris Fonvielle: Advisor	Max Williams: Advisor Emeritus

**Call to Arms editor:
E. Gifford Stack (egstack@cnsps.com)**

