



Vol. 11 No. 3  
November 2004

# The Battlefront

Newsletter of the Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

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**Meeting**  
**Thursday, Nov. 18**  
**2004**  
**NYSUT Building 7 PM**  
**The GAR in Central NY**

Take 481 to Exit 7  
Take 298 West  
Take your first Left. Turn onto  
Brittonfield Parkway. The NYSUT  
Building is the Third on the right.  
Parking in the rear. Enter by rear door.

Meetings are held the third Thursday  
of the month from September through  
June.

## President's Message

The OCCWRT has a great program on the GAR lined up this month. With Christmas just around the corner I hope you are thinking of dessert recipes, items for the silent auction, and Civil War music. Speaking of music, at the time of the Civil War live music was the main source of entertainment. It predated CD's, music videos, tapes, LP's and radios. Every family had members who could play instruments ranging from a pianoforte to basic flutes and harps. At home, church or public outings people never held back raising voices in song, no matter how off key they might be. The Civil War museum in Harrisburg has a great collection of instruments from the 1860's. Some of the brass instruments looked very difficult to play and march at the same time. The bell facing backward over the shoulder allowed the soldiers marching behind to hear the music. Campfire songs spoke of home, missing loved ones and lost comrades in arms. Our Christmas gathering on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> will feature an extraordinary Civil War musician, Jerry Ernst from Rochester, NY. Mark your calendars.

**Beth Greenfield, Co-President**



## OCCWRT 10th ANNIVERSARY

The first meeting of the OCCWRT was held 10 years ago this month on November 17, 1994 at the Onondaga Historical Association. Our guest speaker from Auburn was Anthony Jero who spoke on *Black Soldiers in the Civil War*. Thanks to our members, speakers, and officers, the OCCWRT has become a viable historical organization with a record of projects devoted to preservation and research. We are the voice of the Civil War community in Central New York.

## THE GAR IN CENTRAL NEW YORK

Our November meeting will feature Jerry and Lorraine Orton's presentation on the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War Union veterans' organization. Jerry is the past NY Department Commander of the Sons of Union Veterans, and Lorraine is the past Department President of the Woman's Relief Corps, an auxiliary organization of the Sons of Union Veterans. Along with their outstanding collection of GAR memorabilia, they will discuss Central NY GAR Posts, the members and their activities. This will be local CW history at its best.



## Music Hath Charms

Edwin Forbes, staff artist for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, sketched a Union soldier playing his hand-made cigar box "Cremona". An authentic Cremona was a superior quality violin made in Cremona, Italy during the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Forbes adds the following:

I was attracted one afternoon by strains of "Home, Sweet Home", and as they touched the chord of memory so easily aroused in the desolation of army life, I strolled in direction of the plaintive sounds and came upon the scene portrayed above. I stood at a respectful distance till the air was finished, for it seemed like intrusion to come suddenly upon the two men whose thoughts I knew floated off to lonely Northern homes; but the notes soon ceased, and the violinist smiled a welcome as he laid down his instrument.

Stepping forward, I asked permission to examine the unique "Figaro" burned in the wood. The neck was of soft pine, whittled into shape, and containing holes for the crude pine keys. The bridge and tail-piece were made of cedar, and the strings, which were of good quality, were obtained in Washington. The bow was skillfully made of pine wood and reddish-brown horse-hair.

Noticing the color, I said; "Where did you get this horse-hair?" The fellow remarked sheepishly, "From your mare's tail, when she was tied near here. I took it because it was so long." I assured him that no harm had been done and talked a bit with his companion, a drummer-boy. I found him to be a loquacious youth, like most of his craft, and also that he considered himself an authority on the beauties of music. I said I should like to hear the violin again, and the drummer suggested various tunes – some pathetic, some lively, and a number of military airs popular in camp, the performance of which he criticized quite professionally. "Home, Sweet Home" was repeated with amusing effect at pathos, but I had to admit that the tones were wonderfully good from so crude a little instrument.

From: *An Artist's Memoir of the Civil War* by Edwin Forbes

## Civil War News Stories From

[www.civilwarinteractive.com](http://www.civilwarinteractive.com)

9/24/04 Not all conflicts of the Civil War took place within the bounds of the US. The first Civil War memorial site abroad was established in September in Cherbourg, France with a plaque commemorating the battle between the USS Kearsarge and the Confederate commerce raider CSS Alabama. While in France, tourists can visit an American Civil War site thanks to the Civil War Preservation Trust.

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10/29/04 Got a complaint about a national park you have visited lately? Worried that your complaint will go unheard? The Coalition of Concerned National Park Service Retirees (CCNPSR) has unveiled a new Web site-

**NationalParkComplaints.org** - that allows a park visitor to make his gripe known directly to his US House of Representative member and both US Senators. A copy of the complaint letter will be sent automatically to the US Department of Interior Secretary and the National Park Service Director. The CCNPSR hopes that Congress, when it sees the kinds of problems people are having in the parks, will be stirred to action and demand that Interior and NPS set things right.

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10/3/04 The multimillion-dollar Colonel Patrick O'Rorke Bridge was officially opened in Rochester recently. The four-lane lift bridge over the Genesee River connects Charlotte and Irondequoit and replaces the 87-year old Stutson Street Bridge which will be demolished. Historical military units including the 140<sup>th</sup> NYVI with which O'Rorke served as well as veterans' organizations and Irish groups marched across the bridge in homage to O'Rorke. A Sister City delegation from County Cavan in Ireland, O'Rorke's birthplace, also participated. More than 35 descendants of Col. O'Rorke were among the estimated 1,500 people in attendance. Twenty-three-year-old Patrick Geiger, a senior at West Point and an O'Rorke descendant, drew laughter when he said of O'Rorke: "He graduated number one in his class. I'm number 875 out of 1,100." He praised O'Rorke for his courage and said, "His values of duty, honor and country will always burn inside me."

The 140<sup>th</sup> monument atop Little Round Top, well known to visitors, has a bronze bas-relief bust of O'Rorke who died there on July 2, 1863. Visitors have rubbed what has become a shiny nose for good luck since the monument was dedicated in 1889

## Civil War Flag Exhibit

The New York State Battle Flag Preservation Project will showcase the colorful and courageous Civil War Zouaves with a new battle flag exhibit at the New York State Capitol on Nov. 12, 2004 at 4 PM. Preceding the exhibit opening, the New York State Capitol Tour Program will present a special "Civil War Tour of the Capitol," beginning at 2 PM.

*Flags of the Fighting Zouaves* is the fifth installment in the NYS Battle Flag Preservation Project's exhibition series designed to raise awareness about the collection's conservation needs and to interpretively display conserved flags from the NYS Battle Flag Collection. The exhibit is located on the second floor of the Capitol adjacent to the Governor's Reception Room. Each flag in the exhibit has been conserved by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation at the Peebles Island Resource Center in Waterford, NY.

The exhibit will include newly conserved flags from the 11<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 140<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 146<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> NY Volunteer Infantry regiments. For information about the Capitol Tour Program, call 518-473-7521. Advanced registration is requested. The tour will start at the Empire State Plaza Visitor Center.

## Daylong Tribute to the Zouaves

On November 13, 2004, the NYS Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, NY will host a daylong tribute to the Zouaves. Uniforms and artwork are featured in the exhibit. The 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment NY Volunteer Living History Organization will educate visitors throughout the day about Zouaves and the life of the CW soldier. At 11:30 AM, Michael McAfee will present "Why Zouaves?" At 1:30 PM the Salem Zouaves will give a drill demonstration based upon the manual written by Col. Elmer Ellsworth. For more information and a complete schedule of events, check the museum website at [www.dmna.state.ny.us/historic/mil-hist.htm](http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/historic/mil-hist.htm).

That same evening, the Capital District CW Round Table will hold its annual fall banquet at 6:30 PM at the Holiday Inn Turf on Wolff Road-North End. The featured speaker will be John Hennessy, Chief Historian at the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania Military Park. His topic is *Lincoln, the Great Arbitrator: Lincoln and the War in Virginia in 1862*. Cost: \$35.00.

For information on the banquet which celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Capital District CW Round Table, check their website at: [www.CDCWRT.org](http://www.CDCWRT.org).

## Onondaga County Civil War Round Table New Membership/Renewal Form

Membership dues of the OCCWRT are:

Please Check one of the Following

- \$20.00 a year  
 O.H.A. members \$5.00  
 Seniors and Students \$15.00  
 Family rate (2 or more) \$30.00

Dues may be paid at meetings or sent to:

Onondaga County Civil War Round Table

ATTN: Dave Osborn, Treasurer

2 Thistlewood Lane

Fayetteville, NY 13066

Please find \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed in form of  
Circle One:

Check   M.O.   Cash

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

The Onondaga County Civil War Round Table was organized in 1994 and is now an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month from September through June. The purpose of the OCCWRT is to stimulate and encourage interest in the American Civil War, to assist in community service in order to enhance the study and understanding of the Civil War, to provide educational and historical research of the period, and to promote historic preservation.



Detail from 140<sup>th</sup> NYVI monument on Little Round Top

**Onondaga County Civil War Round Table  
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