



# ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## From the President

It seems only yesterday that I penned the end-of-year/new year message for CVBT on our twentieth anniversary. Now we are poised to enter our twenty second year of preserving Civil War battlefields. To date the CVBT has effectively saved over 1,200 acres of this area's four battlefields, but every acre involved day-by-day efforts, year-to-year. 2017 was no different.

A year ago, CVBT closed on a section of the Chancellorsville battlefield that we call the David B. Kinney Tract. It is not a large parcel, only 1.1 acres, but that amount of land will accommodate a convenience store or a service station. That potential for commercial development ended when we bought it. We then reclaimed the land by demolishing an old, but non-historic house and capping a well. A few years ago we did much the same when we purchased and demolished a nearby brick and cinderblock souvenir complex that many remember as "the castle." Both of these properties are now crucial parts of the preserved Jackson flank attack area.

The year 2017 also saw a visit to our CVBT office by U.S. Congressman Rob Whittman. He thanked us for our

*Our local economies benefit greatly from preserving nationally important Civil War battlefields. Visitors come from all over the country to stand on the very ground where history was made.*

work to preserve battlefields and pledged his support. Our Government Relations Director, Jack Blalock, has begun working with state and local politicians and county supervisors, cultivating relationships as well as conveying the importance and positive results of saving historic places. Our local economies benefit greatly from preserving nationally-important Civil War battlefields. Visitors come from all over the country to stand on the very ground where history was made. Many

of our local politicians recognize this reality and have been correspondingly supportive of the CVBT mission. The CVBT will continue to provide good information to the local county governments so they know where we are focusing our efforts.

At the end of 2017, CVBT hired Elizabeth Heffernan as our new Executive Director. Elizabeth comes to CVBT with a wealth of marketing, membership and organizational management experience and is a powerhouse of energy and ideas. We look forward to working with her. Travis Wakeman will remain as our part-time person and

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continue to move CVBT ahead in the social media world with Facebook, custom CVBT videos, and more.

Board member Paul Scott, former president of the Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg, is creating a new membership platform that will better serve our members. We recognize we have not done well in that area in recent years, so this vital task is getting renewed attention. With new CVBT social media outreach, better government relations, an improved membership program, and a new and energetic Executive Director, 2017 has proved to be a year of organizational development, to better fulfill the mission of preserving battlefield land.

We are pleased with our organizational renewal, but our mission is to acquire and protect dirt and grass. All of us should be proud of what we have accomplished on the ground, and as we enter into 2018 we have several land acquisition projects in the works.

Don't forget to make plans to attend our 2018 annual meeting. In response to several suggestions from our members, this year's theme is: *Beyond Spotsylvania*, and will include activities from April 20-22. The scheduled tours will include:

Central Virginia Cavalry Operations—by award-winning historian Eric J. Wittenberg

Battle at North Anna—by Robert E.L. "Bobby" Krick, historian at Richmond National Battlefield Park.

Our speaker at Saturday's banquet will be Bob Zeller, a leading authority on Civil War photography, and his 3-D photographic experience should not be missed! This annual meeting will be an opportunity to greet old friends, meet new members, experience tours, and enjoy dinner with a multimedia 3-D show. We hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

Tom Van Winkle

## IN MEMORIAM

*Two of our Founding Members have passed, and we should take a moment to remember them and their contributions to the CVBT mission. We preserve historic land in this heavily fought over part of Virginia, and that process can be a very long undertaking. It takes years to both acquire property and then to get it incorporated into the National Park. That second step is important so the land can be interpreted and visited. The word "battlefields" in our name reflects our mission to acquire and hold historically important land. The word "trust" is a reminder that the acreage in our collective CVBT ownership may be held for a great many years before it can be transferred to a resource agency. Our members realize that their hard earned contributions, so critical to acquiring land, will not always provide them with an immediate opportunity to see the site in its full battlefield context. A lot of CVBT-owned land is still in its raw form, not yet restored to its 1860s configuration. In this organization, we accept that sometimes we will only see the first step of the preservation process, which is to actually acquire the real estate and keep it from being developed. **John Bass**, of Spring Hope, North Carolina, and **Henry Trawick**, of Sarasota, Florida, were generous contributors and strong supporters of the CVBT mission. Their contributions have had a significant impact on the Civil War landscape and will benefit future generations who will have occasion to visit these nationally important sites, so patiently acquired and protected. People who engage in battlefield preservation are long-term thinkers who recognize that what we do is for future generations. We say good bye to John Bass and to Henry Trawick, but the land they helped to preserve is a powerful part of their legacy.*



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### The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

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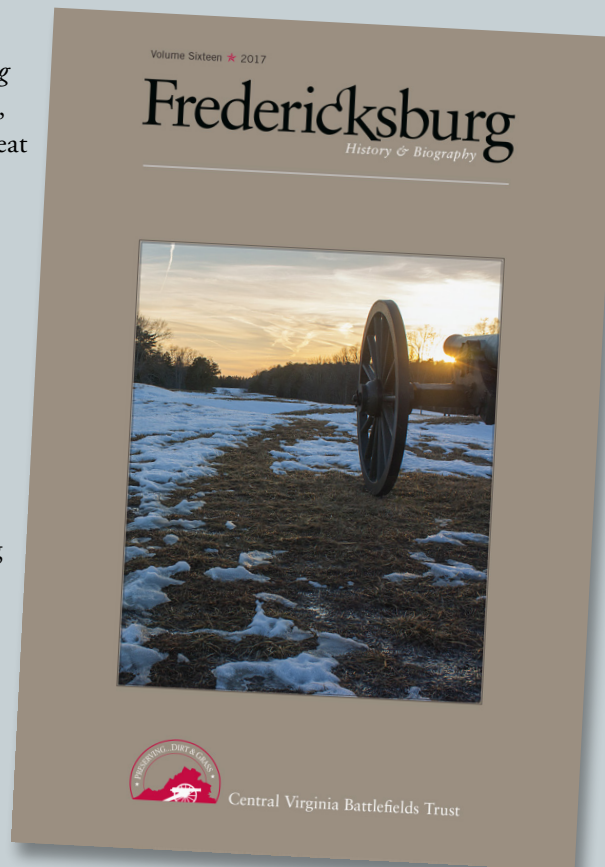
*Newsletter Editor*

# Latest CVBT Journal Available

The CVBT's 2017 journal, *Fredericksburg History and Biography*, is on the street. Of great

interest is Bob Krick's account of the challenges he met in trying to restore historic scenes within the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park to their 1860s configuration. We think of scene restoration as a logical component of making battlefields understandable to those who visit them. Astonishingly, such was not always the case and the pioneering work Bob undertook at Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House set the course for places like Gettysburg to do the same. The National Park Service has an enviable reputation of providing its park visitors with a first rate experience. In the early 1970s, the field forces at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania NMP were instrumental in restoring battlefield scenes, but they had to overcome forces within their own organization that did not recognize the importance of that work.

Another article by CVBT member Tom Tate looks at the development of fuze igniters by Confederate artillerymen. Getting ordnance to explode at the right time has always been of great interest to those who must fight wars and changing technology provides both challenges as well as solutions.



During the Civil War, the explosion of the propelling gunpowder was expected to ignite the fuze of a bursting projectile as it travelled down the cannon's bore. Rifled guns provided for better accuracy, but the tighter fit of the conical rounds sometimes hindered the propelling charge from properly igniting the fuze. Exploding projectiles that do not subsequently explode are the bane of artillerymen, and Tom explores this issue in detail.

Two other articles present primary material. Journal editor Erik Nelson provides the transcribed meeting minutes of the Fredericksburg Town Council for the years 1870 and 1871, the last years of Reconstruction in Virginia. National Park Service historian Noel Harrison presents a contemporary map of the Fredericksburg battlefield, a document drawn by a Confederate, captured by a Federal at Petersburg, carefully preserved in the post-war years, and eventually included in a regimental

history to illustrate the battle of Fredericksburg. Noel astutely noticed that the map's details showed that it is not a depiction of the December 1862 battle, but rather that of May 1863, an astonishing discovery that he shares with CVBT.

CVBT members at the Active Member level of \$135 or above should have received a complimentary copy of the journal in the mail by now. If you have not yet received yours, let us know. Copies are also available for sale through the CVBT office.



## CVBT Hires New Executive Director

The CVBT Board has hired Elizabeth Heffernan as its new executive director. Ms. Heffernan earned a Business Administration degree from the University of North Carolina and has lived in Fredericksburg for more than 22 years. She has a strong background in marketing, sales, and fundraising.



# D.P. Newton and his White Oak Museum

**The CVBT Board of Directors** chose D.P. Newton to be the recipient of its Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award, which was created to recognize an individual or an organization that has made a significant and sustained contribution to our understanding of Civil War history. The recipient does not get to keep the award itself, which remains in the CVBT office, but they do get to keep a \$1,000 contribution to that individual or organization.

We have said this before, but it bears repeating. The cash award does not come from CVBT member donations. Instead, it comes exclusively from the CVBT board itself, our way of honoring Dr. Mike. The recipients can use those funds in any way they see fit, although most use them to continue their respective preservation missions.

D.P. Newton is a native of Stafford County, Virginia who made his living as a waterman. In his off-time, he explored the many places around his home that were associated with the Civil War, but he did more than just casually get out-and-about with a metal detector. He has systematically and methodically recovered artifacts from thousands of hut holes in hundreds of Union winter camps, and developed maps and notes that are a significant resource for additional study. He has also explored the vast Federal supply depot at Aquia Creek Landing, as well as the shore batteries along the Potomac River that effectively blocked maritime access to Washington D.C. and which were subsequently shelled by the Union navy.

A lifetime of metal detecting provided a substantial collection of artifacts, some of them quite rare, and D.P. eventually decided to present them to the public. He worked diligently



D.P. Newton (left), Bonny Newton (holding the coveted Dr. Mike Award), and CVBT President Tom Van Winkle.



The brick White Oak Museum sits on land occupied by the Union Sixth Corps during the winter of 1862-1863.

to adapt an old brick school house into a museum, whose setting is also of interest. The school house, now a museum, sits across the road from White Oak Church, a sanctuary that dates back to Colonial days. The Union Sixth Corps had its camp in the White Oak area during the winter of 1862-63.

As for the museum itself, visitors can see the usual collection of bullets, belt buckles, projectiles, bottles, bayonets, etc., but there is so much more. As an example, D.P. has re-established a camp site, with three winter huts, in intricate detail. He displays a collection of coins and medallions that were adapted by soldiers to be identification tags. He has a section of timbers from an actual corduroy road. He found almost every piece of a 13-inch mortar round, fired from a Union naval vessel at one of the Stafford shore batteries. He built a replica cannon, in exact detail, that greets visitors at the museum entrance.

And then there are the maps and the notes. There are

those relic hunters who find their metal artifacts and move on. D.P. Newton would take the extra steps to make sure that what he found in the field would be useful to other types of research. The White Oak Museum houses D.P.'s documentation of the camps he has searched and the historic sites he has explored.

D.P. Newton has done a phenomenal job in establishing the means to display a lifetime of dedicated work and research. We are all the richer for his efforts and it is the CVBT's great pleasure to recognize him with our Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award. *SL*

The following letter is from a young woman residing near Spotsylvania Court House. It is dated Beechwood, May 23d, 1864 and was published in the Delaware Republican, on June 2, 1864. It will quickly become evident that hers was one of several Unionist families living in the Fredericksburg area. The action that Ewell's Corps precipitated was the Harris Farm battle, where the CVBT owns property.

Dear Sister,

Once more I take my pen in hand to let you know we are well and staying here, but that is all. You don't know how lonesome we are since the U.S. soldiers left. On Thursday night we went to bed completely worn out, and slept very soundly. On Friday morning when we got up the pickets were gone. We had just got done breakfast when we saw some of the rebels, they came on and one of them shot our dog; mother begged him not to do so, but it was no use. The rebel cavalry came soon after and Ewell's Corps of Infantry arrived in the evening and went on about a half a mile where they had a severe fight. They owned they got a complete whipping. They brought about 80 wounded back to our barn—the last one of whom got away to-day, much to our relief. On Friday there was a skirmish line thrown on around our house, and it was really laughable to see the graybacks walking up and throwing down their guns. They say they are starving and will not fight. They were trying to cut off a wagon train, but thank God they did not succeed. If our house had been directly in range you would have seen us before now. They have got the cars running from the creek [Aquia Creek] to Fredericksburg I heard today, and I hope you will come home soon, if you think you can be satisfied. Send us word before you come, and we will try to send for you. I tell you it is hard doing without a horse. I hope father got home safe. He just got away from here in time. They came and took the nurses from the hospital in about half an hour after he left. Mother begged them to leave them to care of their own men, but they would not.

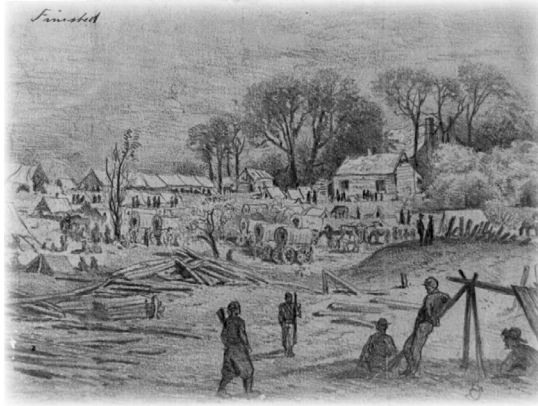


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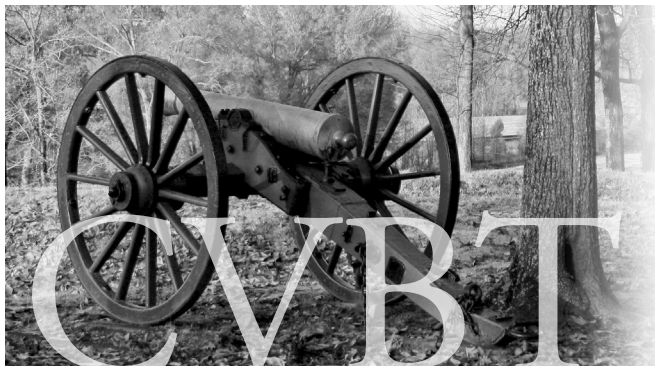
You don't know what people they are; I wish the U.S. soldiers would let the rebel wounded stay on the battle field, they deserve nothing better. I could see every one of them shot before my eyes. There were six buried in our lot. I wish Gen. Lee and all his men were in the same condition. There was one buried this morning; I expect if you were here you would be afraid to go to the wagon house after hearing them groan so. I believe one can get used to anything. Our yard is almost covered with blood; you cannot pick up a piece of wood that is not completely wet with human gore. Do not faint or be afraid to come home when you read this letter. The little pig-pen is almost full of guns, so you can see if they hunt us we can shoot them. I must tell you what we have to pay for things here, flour is selling in town for \$800 a barrel, bacon from \$8 to \$10 a pound, coffee \$16, sugar \$12, rice \$1, and not much at these prices, calicoes \$12 per yard. I do not know what muslin is now. I gave 50 cents for one pair of shoestrings. I will send you a sample of some dresses we got last summer and gave \$8 a yard for them, and got them very cheap. I have got one home spun dress; it was a long time before I would wear it, but I had to come to it. I am afraid we will see no more of the U.S. boys; I wish they would camp on our place until the war is over, which it will soon be. The soldiers are getting dissatisfied and discouraged. I expect to hear of Richmond being taken soon.

—A.M.A.

*Note: A.M.A. is Anna M. Armstrong*

### E-Newsletter available

The CVBT believes it is important to maintain close contact with those who generously support our mission. We do this through a quarterly newsletter that is a tangible reminder in your mailbox of our regard and appreciation. Some organizations think they can save money by converting to an electronic format, but we have found that people often like to be able to hold something in their hand. Still, if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail, we will certainly accommodate you. To change your current newsletter mailing to an electronic distribution, please contact us at [comdir@cvbt.org](mailto:comdir@cvbt.org) and we will make that change for you.



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The mission of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust is to preserve land associated with the four major campaigns of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House.

For information on membership, please write to the Trust at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402; call our office at (540) 374-0900; or visit our website at [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org). Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

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Annual Member	\$ 35
Active Member	\$ 135
Sustaining Member	\$ 250

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Patron	\$ 500
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Life Member	\$ 5,000

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Corporate Member	\$ 5,000
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