# CVBT To Host A Very Special Dinner on December 13

he Central Virginia
Battlefields Trust is
pleased to offer a truly
memorable event coinciding with the 150th anniversary
of the Battle of Fredericksburg.
Noted authors and historians
Robert K. Krick and Gary W.
Gallagher will join us to discuss
two specific aspects of the Battle.



Gary W. Gallagher

Bob's presentation will focus on "Fredericksburg under War's Savage Heel: the Plight of the City's Civilians," and Gary's lecture will be entitled "Confederates Respond to the Battle of Fredericksburg." Several of their books will be available for sale in the banquet hall, and both Bob and Gary will be happy to inscribe them. The incomparable historian and battlefield preservationist, Ed Bearss, will also be present, and he will sign copies of his book Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg—The Campaigns That Changed the Civil War. CVBT's newly published Volume Eleven of its popular journal Fredericksburg History and Biography will be available as well, and the journal authors will be on hand to sign them. The event will be



Robert K. Krick

held at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel, 2801 Plank Road in Central Park. It will include a delicious buffet dinner and a premium brand cash bar. Please join us at this special anniversary event. It is an opportunity you will not want to miss! For those of you who may be interested, CVBT is holding a

block of guest rooms at the Hospitality House Hotel, which will be available for the rate of \$85.00 per night, for both single and double rooms. Please note as well that the ground floor of the hotel is "pet friendly."

WHEN: December 13, 2012, after the completion of the NPS program downtown. Cocktail Hour at 6:00; Buffet Dinner at 6:45; Program to begin at 8:00.

WHERE: The Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel, 2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

For room reservations at the CVBT block rate, please contact the hotel directly at (540) 786-8321.

Cost: \$50.00

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{CVBT TO HOST A VERY SPECIAL DINNER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1}

If you are interested in joining us, please mail your check to CVBT, PO Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. You may also pay by credit card on our website, at www.cvbt.org. If you have any questions, please contact us by phone at 540-374-0900, or by email at execdirector@cvbt.org.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible, since seating will be limited. We look forward to seeing you on December 13! SL

### Stay on the Skirmish Line!

Take a look at the mailing label on your latest Skirmish Line newsletter. You will see that it includes your CVBT membership expiration date. As a dirt and grass outfit, members can help us save on mailing costs by checking that expiration date and

sending in their renewal on their own. If the date is highlighted, your membership has expired. While we would like to share the Skirmish Line with everyone, we can only afford to send it to current members. So please renew your membership at the appropriate time. You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



Remember to order all your Amazon.com items through the CVBT Amazon web link. CVBT

receives a percentage of the order to help preserve hallowed ground!

## Donald Stocker Memorials

he Central Virginia Battlefields Trust would like to acknowledge the generosity of a number of individuals who have made donations to CVBT in honor of Mr. Donald N. Stocker. Mr. Stocker was the late father of Jeff Stocker of Center Valley, PA, who has been a member of CVBT since 1998. Jeff's great-grandfather served in the 153rd Pennsylvania and fought at the Battle of Chancellorsville. As a result, Donald Stocker loved to spend time on the field at Chancellorsville. Jeff is currently working on a book about the 153rd Pennsylvania's involvement in Jackson's Flank Attack. All donations made in Mr. Stocker's name have been earmarked for the Rodes-Doles Flank Attack property. CVBT is most appreciative of the donations given by the following people:

Dennis and Betty Dalcin
Ms. Sally Dell
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce L. Feldbaum and family
Mrs. Elisabeth Gates
Mr. and Mrs. W. Anthony Major
Mr. and Mrs. Jack L. Minnich
Mr. and Mrs. Mike Morrone
Edwin and Nancy R. Root
Jeff and Marliese Stocker

The CVBT Board would also like to express appreciation for a recent donation made by Mr. and Mrs. William C. Taylor, in honor of former Board member Bill Kinnamon. SL



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# CVBT President Mike Stevens' Speech Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg

ood afternoon.
Before I start,
please join with
me in praying
God's blessings upon the
men and women of our
Armed Forces who are putting themselves in harm's
way for us and for our
country in the present war.
May they come home safely
and with honor. Amen.

"Oh stranger, tread lightly, 'tis holy ground here." So begins the poem, "The Soldier's Grave."

We meet this afternoon upon this holy ground of the Fredericksburg battlefield to commemorate the 140th anniversary of that battle, fought 12/11-15/62. We meet to remember and to honor the men wearing both blue and gray who fought and fell here, whose blood and bravery have consecrated this ground, whose voices still speak to those of us who understand, to those of us who are willing to listen with our hearts as well as with our heads.

"Never forget, nor dishonor," would have been their counsel and their prayer, and I am certain that they would have been pleased to know that their sacrifice and their suffering are being acknowledged and respected by this ceremony today.

We meet upon this sacred soil to remember and to honor these men, not only for their courage and for their sacrifice but also because we owe them a debt that is beyond repaying.

First, of course, they took themselves into an experience that made us a nation. Shelby Foote puts it this way: "Before the war, people had a theoretical notion of having a country. When the war was over, both sides knew they had a country. They had been there. They had walked its hills and tramped its roads. They knew the effort they had expended and their dead friends had expended to preserve it. The war made this country an actuality."

These were the seeds of modern day America, an accomplishment that has given us much of all that we enjoy today.



And so when I talk about the debt we owe to these men, that sense of identity is one part of it.

The other part is spiritual. It lies in the example these men left us of virtue and values: Of honor, and duty, and love of God and country, of courage and self-sacrifice and loyalty to cause and comrade.

Such words as honor

and duty have an unfamiliar, almost quaint sound because they are unfamiliar to all too many Americans. But such values and virtues we as Americans would do well to reflect upon and to emulate.

Such values and virtues were never more apparent than they were during the Civil War. We can learn about them from the words of the men who were there. Robert E. Lee, for example, said: "I have fought against the people of the North because I believed they were seeking to wrest from the south its dearest rights. But I have never cherished toward them bitter or vindictive feelings, and I have never seen the day when I did not pray for them."

Colonel Samuel Zook, brigade commander, II Corps, AOP, wrote this to a friend on 12/10/62: "If tomorrow night finds me dead remember me kindly as a soldier who meant to do his whole duty."

Such a commitment to do one's whole duty was shared by most of the men on both sides of the Rappahannock River that fateful night, and it must be remembered that, by and large, they were not professional soldiers: Rather, they were ordinary men and boys, with lives and loves, with Moms and Dads and wives and children, with hopes and dreams, with futures filled with bright promise and exciting possibilities. But these ordinary men and boys, when faced with Ultimate Truth as they saw it, did what needed to be done, and over 17,000 of them would be casualties before the fighting was over.

Today we honor and respect these men for having fought for their beliefs—for liberty and for freedom as they defined it. It is not merely an irony, of course, but a great

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## {President Mike Stevens' speech, continued from page 3}

tragedy that their understanding of those ideals was separated by such a gulf that a Great War ensued.

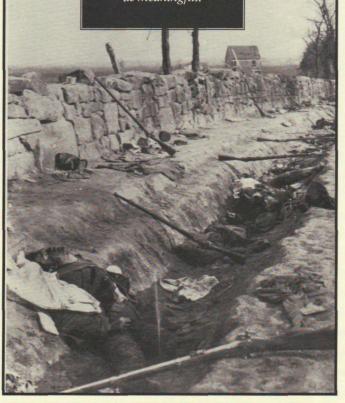
Nevertheless, it is a fact: On both sides, they were motivated by the highest of ideals, and they have earned the right to be remembered and honored forever and for all time.

Their example shows us the way. Their example shows us the meaning of courage and suffering. We should recognize just how much of a test of the human spirit we mean when we talk about their courage. We should recognize just how destructive the war was when we talk about their suffering.

Scenes of such courage and suffering are beyond imagining and almost impossible to comprehend. Private William Kepler, 4th Ohio, AOP, took part in the assault across the fields from the city of Fredericksburg toward the Confederate position on Marye's Heights on 12/13/62, and in a letter afterward he describes what it was like: "...the sight is horrible and

heart-rending; hundreds of bleeding and mangled are dragging themselves from the dead and dying, are trampled upon by the thousands, many of whom in the excitement hardly knew whither they were going save to the certain slaughter. Wounded men fall upon wounded; the dead upon the mangled; the baptism of fire adds more wounds and brings even death to helpless ones; as we look back the field seems covered with mortals in agony; some motionless, others are dragging themselves toward the rear; occasionally the shell or cannon ball that comes into their midst, sends arms, hands, legs, and clothing into the air; on the front line there is no safety, for here men fall; our colors for a moment are down, for our noble color-bear-er...falls, having his head blown from his body, leaving his

A CW battlefield echoes with the stories of these men, and being able to walk such hallowed ground allows us to walk into and with the past, making connections with these men that cannot be made in any other way that is as meaningful.



CONFEDERATE DEAD IN THE SUNKEN ROAD

blood and brains upon comrades and the flag. It is a baptism of fire and blood. Blood is everywhere."

Watching this was Private Alexander Hunter, 17th Virginia, ANV, who afterward wrote: "All that day we watched the fruitless charges, with their fearful slaughter, until we were sick at heart. As I witnessed one line swept away by one fearful blast from Ker-

shaw's men behind the stone wall, I forgot they were enemies and only remembered that they were men, and it is hard to see in cold blood brave men die...We were filled with wonder and a pitying admiration for men who could rush with such unflinching valor, such mad recklessness into the jaws of destruction...."

In the deepest and most literal sense, those memories, that sacrifice, that suffering are sacred.

So on this day of commemoration and remembrance let us resolve to do all we can to continue to honor these men who wore both blue and gray, men who believed that there are things more important than life

itself, men who risked everything for the promise of nothing save honor and principle.

Let us resolve to do all we can to keep their memory and their meaning, their sacrifice and their stories alive so that future generations too can learn from them, can learn what it means to give one's life rather than to lose it, can learn what it means to love your country, can learn what it means to be an American.

How best to do this? How best to remember and to honor these men to whom we owe so much? I'd like to mention one way that I'm very much involved with: The preservation of CW battlefields. I am a member of CVBT, a non-profit lands trust whose mission is to purchase significant CW battlefields so as to save them forever.



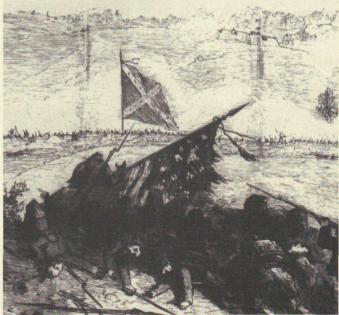
THE BATTLE OVER MARYE'S HEIGHTS BROUGHT OUT GREAT COURAGE, SACRIFICE AND COMPASSION AMONG THE MEN IN BOTH BLUE AND GRAY.

CW battlefields are being lost at an ever-accelerating pace, and with every loss we lose the most direct and potent of connections. The ground of a CW battlefield is sacred precisely because the blood and the bravery of those men who fought and fell there have forever mixed with the soil, staining it with honor and with everlasting significance.

A CW battlefield echoes with the stories of these men, and being able to walk such hallowed ground allows us to walk into and with the past, making connections with these men that cannot be made in any other way that is as meaningful.

Right over there, for example, is Willis Hill. It was the center of the Confederate defensive position during the battle, a scene of unimaginable chaos and suffering. CVBT was able to help save that land from development, and it is now saved forever. As long as we can bring young people to such a place, and tell them the stories of the men who went to war not much older than they are, I believe we can keep the memories alive.



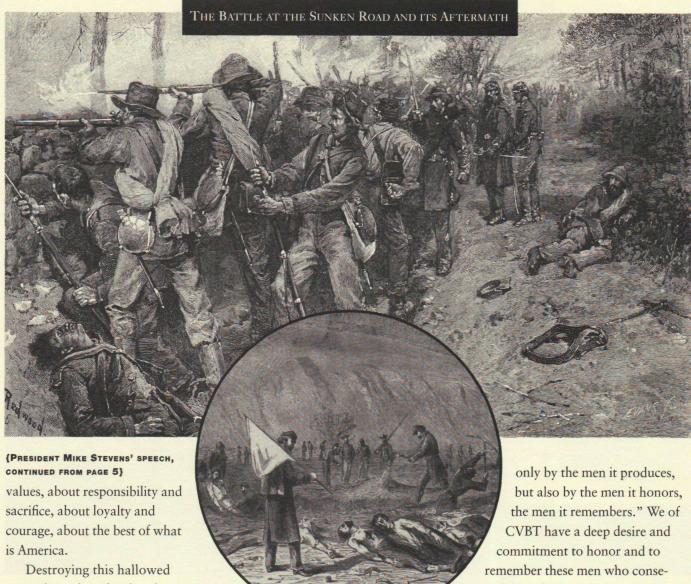


Or how about the story of a Confederate sergeant from South Carolina, Richard Kirkland, whose monument stands right behind me. It was a cold December night during that terrible battle. Sgt. Kirkland could hear sounds of suffering coming from wounded men in the Union positions, sounds of suffering from men who were his enemy, and yet those sounds were more than his conscience could bear. And so he risked his life by crossing the Stone Wall to take aid and water to those Union troops. He is remembered today by this monument dedicated to "The Angel of Marye's Heights."

We can learn a great deal from his story, from keeping his memory alive.

George Will has called memory the reservoir of reverence, and walking this hallowed ground stimulates and encourages memory, memory of who these men were and what they did, memory of what they mean to us and to our nation, memory of what they can teach us about virtue and

{CONTINUED ON PAGE 6}



Destroying this hallowed ground, on the other hand, assures that only memory remains, and this alone, untethered by physical associations, will inevitably dissipate like morning mist and be lost forever

and for all time.

The past vanishes all too swiftly, and without preserva-

The past vanishes all too swiftly, and without preservation of these fields the men who died there simply die and disappear first from sight and then from memory. We who are in full possession of the heritage purchased by their blood and by their bravery, we who are future for whom they fought, stand quite literally as the guardians of their memory and stewards of their sacrifice.

And the simple question is: Are we worthy of that sacrifice? If we wish to honor that sacrifice, if we wish to honor their memory, do our lives reflect those wishes? Are we being wise and generous stewards of the legacy they have left us? They made the ultimate sacrifice, they paid the ultimate price: Shall that purchase price be forgotten or ignored?

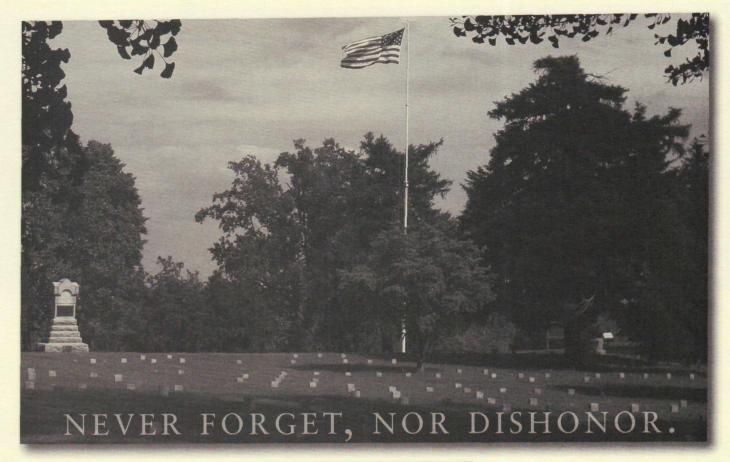
John F. Kennedy once said, "A nation reveals itself not

commitment to honor and to remember these men who consecrated these fields with their blood and with their bravery, and we believe there is no better way to do this than to save the very a sanctified, ground which is literally America's

ground so sanctified, ground which is literally America's sacred soil, ground which because of our efforts will be there for all of us, for our children, for our children's children, will be there for as long as there is an America.

The fighting here was in large part over when nightfall came on 12/13/62, but the suffering was far from over. Colonel Zook wrote that while it was bad enough to see men "torn to shreds" during battle, it was even worse to "walk alone amongst the slaughtered brave in the 'still small hours of the night.'

Private Erskine Church, 27th Conn. of Zook's Brigade, afterward described in vivid detail the scenes on the battle-field and in the makeshift field hospitals set up to care for the wounded, scenes of shock and suffering and horror. He closed by talking about the dead, who "are rudely tumbled into a trench half filled with water their graves unknown.



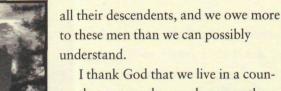
With the hoot owl to sing their recquiem, with no kind friend to shed a parting tear...their funeral rites are attended by a few hard-hearted soldiers. A volley fired over their grave if grave it can be called, unknown forgotten, forgotten forever."

"Unknown forgotten, forgotten forever." In truth many of these men who died here and on CW battlefields around the country died leaving us no letters or personal effects, and many didn't even leave us their names.

The ground, therefore, is all we have left to remember them by, and with its loss a link—for some their only link—to a future that preserves both their deeds and their stories will be lost as well.

We of CVBT believe that this must never be ignored or forgotten. We care what happened, and what happens, to these men, and we are therefore pledged to fight the good fight to preserve these battlefields, these reservoirs of memory, until the Final Roll is called.

A part of the heritage of many of us here today is that we came into this world with the blood of one or more of these men in our veins. But all of us are their benefactors,



try that can produce such men as these.

May we never forget them, nor dishonor their memory.

To paraphrase the poem. "The Young."

To paraphrase the poem, "The Young Dead Soldiers" by Archibald MacLeish:

"The young dead soldiers do not speak.

Nevertheless, they are heard in the still fields; who has not heard them?

They say: We leave you our deaths, give them their Meaning."

We meet this afternoon to remember and to honor the men wearing both blue and gray who fought and fell here during the battle of Fredericksburg in 12/62, ordinary men who did such extraordinary things on these fields. May God bless and keep their memory and their meaning, their sacrifice and their stories alive, now and forevermore. Amen, and amen.

I thank you for the privilege of this platform, and for your attention.



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The Trust's mission is to purchase Civil War battlefield terrain and to advocate for battlefield protection at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

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.

Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

#### **Membership Categories**

Annual Member	\$ 35	Patron	\$ 500	Life Patron	\$10,000
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