

HARDTACK

Indianapolis Civil War Round Table Newsletter

<http://indianapoliscwrt.org/>



November 10, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.
Meeting at Indiana History Center

The Plan of the Day Andy Smith's Medal of Honor



Andrew Jackson Smith escaped from slavery in Kentucky in January 1862. He was given sanctuary by the Forty-first Illinois Volunteer Infantry and became a servant to Major John Warner. He accompanied Major Warner and the Forty-first Illinois to Fort Heiman, Fort Donelson, and Shiloh and then went with Warner to Clinton, IL in April 1862. In May 1863, Andy Smith traveled to Massachusetts to enlist in the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. He served with the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts in coastal operations in South Carolina and Florida during 1863-65. At the Battle of Honey Hill, S.C., on 30 November 1864, he saved the National Colors under heavy fire and rescued the regimental colors as well, carrying both from the field. After the war, Andy Smith returned to Clinton, IL and then to his home in Lyon County, Kentucky where he became a prosperous leader of his community and lived until 1932.

In December 1916, Dr. Burt G. Wilder, who had been a medical officer with the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts, recommended Sergeant Smith for the Medal of Honor for his actions at Honey Hill, but the recommendation was rejected by the War Department in early January 1917 with the claim that the government possessed no records to verify his gallantry in the battle. In fact, the government did possess the records and the original ruling was successfully appealed in an effort that took many years. In January 2001, President Clinton made the posthumous presentation of the Medal of Honor to Sergeant Smith, the most delayed award of a medal in our nation's history. Present to receive the Medal for Sergeant Smith were his ninety-three year old daughter, Caruth Smith Washington, and his grandson, Andrew S. Bowman, who worked diligently for many years, together with his wife Esther, to correct the injustice to Sergeant Smith.

Our Guest Speaker

Dr. Sharon MacDonald

Rob Beckman and Sharon MacDonald served as the historical advisors to Sergeant Smith's family and worked closely with Andrew and Esther Bowman to reverse the 1917 denial of Sergeant Smith's Medal of Honor. They are currently writing a book on the life of Sergeant Smith in cooperation with Andrew and Esther. Rob Beckman holds bachelor's degrees in psychology and history education and a master's degree in history from Illinois State University. He teaches history at Dunlap High School near Peoria, Illinois. Sharon MacDonald holds a master's and a PhD degree from the University of Minnesota. She taught military and Civil War history at Illinois State University from 1973 – 2005.

In "Andy Smith's Medal of Honor," Sharon MacDonald will first talk about the Battle of Honey Hill where inexperienced Union leadership failed to exercise unity of command and ordered the Fifty-fifth Massachusetts to make a suicidal charge. The accurate reconstruction of the events of that charge and the actions of Andy Smith depend in large part on the use of Confederate sources. The second part of the talk will describe the family's efforts over eighty-five years to obtain reconsideration of the denial of Andy Smith's Medal of Honor, an effort made possible by the involvement of the Springfield, Illinois Civil War Round Table and the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table.

Roster of Officers and Committees for the 2008-2009 Campaign

Officers:

President: Nikki Schofield
Vice President: Tom Dean

Secretary: Frank Bynum
Treasurer: Tony Roscetti

Committee Chairs:

Programs: Tom Dean
Website: Paul Watson

Preservation: Andy O'Donnell
Publicity: Dave Buchanan & Tony Roscetti

Quiz Master:

Tony Trimble

Summer Campaign:

Nikki Schofield

HARDTACK Newsletter:

Editor: Jenny Thompson

2008-2009 Campaign Plans

Dec. 15, 2008	to be announced	Please note this is the 3rd Monday.
Jan. 12, 2009	to be announced	
Feb. 9, 2009	to be announced	
March 9, 2009	to be announced	
April 13, 2009	to be announced	
May 11, 2009	to be announced	
June 8, 2009 (Banquet)	to be announced	

***Note our meetings will be held at the Indiana History Center through March. Our April and May meetings will be held at Speedway Baptist Church at 2986 Moller Road. Our June banquet will be held at the Indian Lake Country Club on the northeast side of the city.**

Other Camp Activities

Carmel Civil War Round Table: We meet at 7:00 PM on the third Wednesday of the month at the Carmel Clay Historical Society's Monon Depot Museum at 221 First St. SW in Carmel.

Upcoming Lincoln Events in Spencer County

November 22, 2008 – Lincoln Thanksgiving Dinner, Chrisney 4-H Community Center
Dine like the pioneers at this unique event inspired by the fact that while Lincoln was president he established the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.

December 6-7, 2008 (at Rockport) / December 13-14, 2008 (at Santa Claus) – Christmas with Lincoln

Honest Abe will make special appearances at these annual holiday celebrations.

February 12, 2009 – Remembering Lincoln, Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial
Will include a wreath laying ceremony at the grave site of Nancy Hanks, guests speakers and an open house.

Special Orders

Understanding The Life and Times of Abraham Lincoln:

Learn about federal records in the National Archives- Great Lake Region in Chicago and the National Archives-Southeast Region in Morrow, Georgia that provide rich first hand stories about Native Americans, migrant families, slavery and freedom, agriculture and commercial development, disunion and Civil War, and the legacies of Abraham Lincoln from the period of the 1780's through the 1860's.

This Fall 2008 Workshop will be held Saturday, November 8, 2008 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. at The National Archives and Records Administration – Great Lakes Region at 7358 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois, approximately 2 ½ miles southeast of Midway Airport. The entrance is located one block west of Pulaski Road on 75th Street. To register for this workshop, please call 773-948-9001 or email chicago.archives@nara.gov with the names and contact information for all attendees.

Official Records

ICWRT attendance for October: 76

Alan T. Nolan Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund: The Executive Board of the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table has established this fund to provide membership dues, annual tour expenses or other worthwhile purpose for any full-time student of any age. Please see Tony Roscetti to donate to this fund.

June Banquet: Jean and Phil Bly have agreed to be coordinators for the June Banquet, which will be held at the Indian Lake Country Club on the northeast side of the city. They will select the menu, and let us know the cost.

Renew your membership: Please renew your membership this month to be included in the new roster. The 2008-2009 roster will be prepared around the end of November and

will be available for the December meeting. The re-enlistment form is at the back of the Hardtack.

Book Raffle list:

The Brother's War: Civil War Letters to Their Loved Ones from the Blue and Gray, edited by Annette Tarpert

No Better Place to Die: The Battle of Stone's River, by Peter Cozzens

Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900, by Stuart McConnell

The Civil War – A Narrative: Second Manasses to Pocotaligo, by Shelby Foote

The Civil War – Tenting Tonight: The Soldier's Life, Time-Life Books

***Anyone wishing to donate books for upcoming raffles should either bring them to Tony Roscetti at the November meeting or contact him to make arrangements for pick up.**

Test Your Civil War Knowledge (with Trimble's Trivia)

How much do you know about the Civil War Medal of Honor?

1. Who were the first recipients of the Medal of Honor?

2. Name the Private who won the medal for single-handedly manning an artillery piece and firing into Jackson's line at First Bull Run.

3. Who was the Vermont Captain who won the medal by capturing 83 rebels with a single company at the Codoris House?

4. Name the 19 year old Lt. who won the medal for leading a charge up Missionary Ridge.

5. Name the Gunner's Mate who locked himself inside the ship's magazine aboard the U.S.S. Pinola to prevent sparks from a fire from exploding the powder.

Answers to October Quiz:

1. What was "peas on a trencher"? Federal bugle call for breakfast
2. Who introduced Lincoln at his 1st Inaugural? Edward Baker
3. Where was Harwood's Tobacco Factory? For what was it used during the war? Richmond; Temporary quarters for Federal prisoners
4. About whom did McClellan write, "There is no doubt that he was the best infantry soldier developed on either side during the Civil War"? Gen. George Pickett
5. Where was "Fort Damnation" and "Fort Hell"? Who coined these names? Petersburg; U.S. Grant

The Soldiers Speak

THE BATTLE OF HONEY HILL:

John J. Abercrombie, quoted in Webb Garrison Jr.'s *Strange Battles of the Civil War*: "We pushed on, however, until we finally arrived at a large rice plantation crossed by narrow dykes, which offered quite a serious obstacle to our farther advance. Just beyond this we could see Grahamville and nearer by the railroad, in front of which rifle pits had been thrown up. Advancing across the rice fields, waist-deep in water and mud, we could see fresh troops disembarking from a train evidently just arrived, and before we could reach the thither side they too had taken their place in the opposing line, joining in a rattling fire of musketry. The main road crossing the plantation was so narrow that we could bring into action but two guns of the 3d New York Battery, which opened vigorously. This brought speedy response from a heretofore unnoticed earthwork mounted with 34-pound seacoast howitzers, which had been part of Fort Moultrie's armament at the outbreak of the war. Then a field battery opened from opposite our left center, all resulting in a cross-fire of shell and case shot in addition to the singeing musketry fire from the infantry who had now gotten our range. From this converging fire our men could secure no protection, the muddy water being too deep to permit them to lie down; and, furthermore, as the wounded began to fall, they were in danger of drowning, thus necessitating the dropping out from the firing line of two additional men each time to carry them off the field. This so speedily decreased our force that we were compelled finally to fall back to the edge of the woods from where we had begun our charge less than an hour before."

Brig. Gen. John P. Hatch, quoted in Webb Garrison Jr.'s *Strange Battles of the Civil War*: "The left of [Gen. E.E.] Potter's brigade – re-enforced by two companies of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteers and part of Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Volunteers, which had by mistake taken position on the left of the road – made two desperate attacks on the main work of the enemy, led by Col. A.S. Hartwell, commanding Second Brigade. They were repulsed with severe loss. The Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Volunteers were rallied, and, with the Marine Battalion, sent to the support of the right wing of the line of battle, with orders to turn the left flank of the enemy. They advanced gallantly, but were unable to carry the intrenchments."

HONEY HILL MOH CITATIONS, from *The Medal of Honor of the United States Army*, 1948 printing:

Orson W. Bennett, 1st Lieutenant, Company A, 102d United States Colored Troops. Date of Issue: 9 Mar 1887.

"After several unsuccessful efforts to recover three pieces of abandoned artillery, this officer gallantly led a small force fully 100 yards in advance of the Union lines and brought in the guns, preventing their capture."

Thomas F. Ellsworth, Captain, Company B, 55th Massachusetts Infantry. Date of Issue: 18 Nov. 1895.

“Under a heavy fire carried his wounded commanding officer from the field.”

George E. Gouraud, Captain and aide-de-camp, United States Volunteers. Date of Issue: 21 Aug. 1893.

“While under severe fire of the enemy, which drove back the command, rendered valuable assistance in rallying the men.”

Soldier of the Month

ANDREW JACKSON SMITH

From <http://suvchw.org/past/ajsmith.htm>, Photograph courtesy of Congressional Medal of Honor Society and submitted by [P.Fazzini](#), Camp #91, Ohio Department, SUVCW. Information from U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC.



The following is the citation of Medal of Honor Recipient Corporal Andrew Jackson Smith of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry, presented posthumously by President William Clinton in January, 2001:

The President of the United States of America,
authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has
awarded in the name of the Congress
the Medal of Honor to
CORPORAL ANDREW JACKSON SMITH
UNITED STATES ARMY

for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty: Corporal Andrew Jackson Smith, of Clinton, Illinois, a member of the 55th Massachusetts Voluntary Infantry, distinguished himself on 30 November 1864 by saving his regimental colors, after the color bearer was killed during a bloody charge called the Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina. In the late afternoon, as the 55th Regiment pursued enemy skirmishers and conducted a running fight, they ran into a swampy area backed by a rise where the Confederate Army awaited. The surrounding woods and thick underbrush impeded infantry movement and artillery support. The 55th and 54th regiments formed columns to advance on the enemy position in a flanking movement. As the

Confederates repelled other units, the 55th and 54th regiments continued to move into flanking positions. Forced into a narrow gorge crossing a swamp in the face of the enemy position, the 55th's Color-Sergeant was killed by an exploding shell, and Corporal Smith

took the Regimental Colors from his hand and carried them through heavy grape and canister fire. Although half of the officers and a third of the enlisted men engaged in the fight were killed or wounded, Corporal Smith continued to expose himself to enemy fire by carrying the colors throughout the battle. Through his actions, the Regimental Colors of the 55th Infantry Regiment were not lost to the enemy. Corporal Andrew Jackson Smith's extraordinary valor in the face of deadly enemy fire is in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon him, the 55th Regiment, and the United States Army.

Historic Site of the Month

Mount Pleasant Cemetery at Grand Rivers, Kentucky

Photo from www.HomeOfHeroes.com

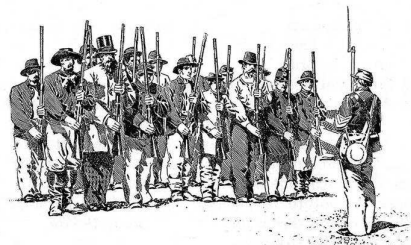
The gravesite of Andrew Jackson Smith.



If you have a short article, book review, or some other item that may be of interest to our members, please submit it via email to the editor at jkt60@att.net by the tenth day following the preceding month's meeting. Please list HARDTACK in the subject line and include your email address in case I need to contact you.

Re-enlist NOW for the 2008-2009 Campaign

All ICWRT members may continue to receive the monthly newsletter, HARDTACK, via email at no additional charge. Members who prefer to receive the HARDTACK by U.S. Mail are asked to pay an additional \$12.00 to help cover printing and mailing costs.



Please bring your completed re-enlistment form (below) together with your payment to Tony Roscetti, ICWRT Treasurer, at the next Round Table meeting, or mail your re-enlistment form and payment to:

Tony Roscetti
6270 Brixton Lane
Indianapolis, Indiana 46220

Phone: (317) 475-9227
Email: anthony.roschetti@nationalcity.com

Please complete and detach the form below and include with your check:

ICWRT Membership Enlistment for July 2008 thru June 2009

Please print legibly!

Name..... Date

Address.....
.....

Phone: (.....) Email Address:

We must have a valid email address if you wish to receive the HARDTACK newsletter free of charge!

(please specify Membership Level):

_____ **\$30 Individual** _____ **\$35 Family** _____ **\$15 Student**

_____ **I wish to receive the newsletter via U.S. Mail for an additional \$12**

Donation to Alan T. Nolan Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund \$ _____
In addition to my membership dues, please accept my generous gift of \$ _____
to the ICWRT general operating account (This donation is not tax deductible)

If someone invited you to join the ICWRT, please list his or her name below:

Description of Honey Hill:

Brig. Gen. John P. Hatch, quoted in Webb Garrison Jr.'s *Strange Battles of the Civil War*: "At 11 A.M. the head of the column came unexpectedly on the main body of the enemy in position. At this point the road bends to the left. The advance following it found themselves in front of an enclosed work pierced for four guns. The redoubt, situated on the crest of a small ridge, was the center of the enemy's line. It is said to have been built two years since, although until now unknown to us. Following the crest of the hill on either side of the redoubt, the enemy had thrown up a line of rifle pits, and within these waited with seven pieces of artillery our attack. In front of the enemy's line ran a small creek, bounded by a marsh covered with dense undergrowth. This was not impassable, but presented a serious obstacle to our advance, being completely commanded by the enemy's fire."

Indianapolis Civil War Round Table
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