

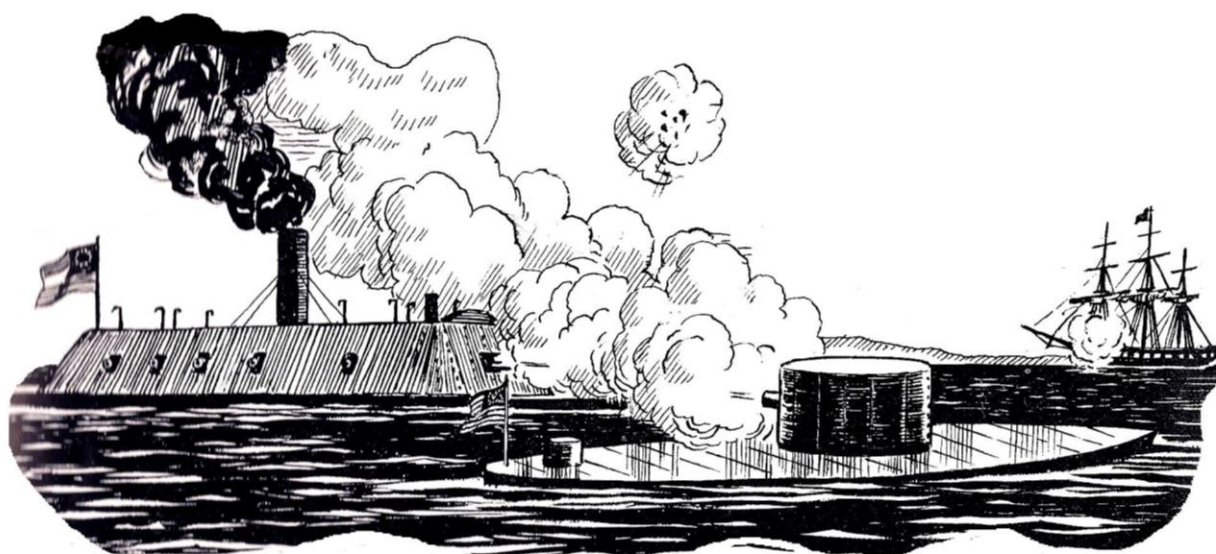
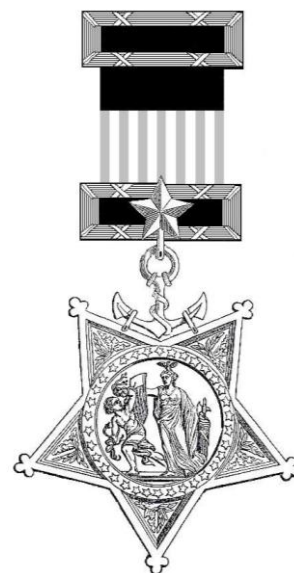
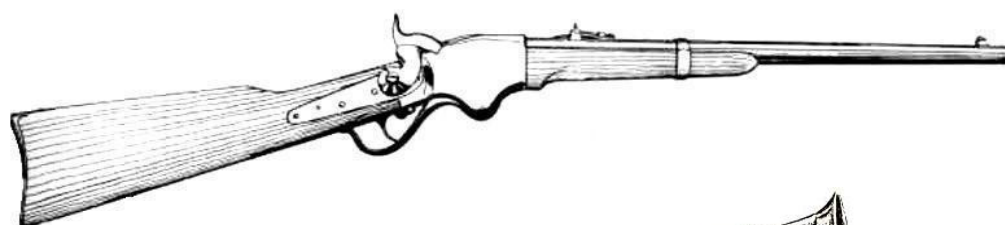
# The Bugle



Quarterly Journal of the  
Camp Curtin Historical Society  
and Civil War Round Table, Inc.

Spring 2012  
Volume 22, Number 1

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*1862 Civil War Innovations and Firsts*

*"The field upon which we now stand will be known as classic ground, for here has been the great central point of the organization of our military forces. When my administration of public affairs will have been forgotten and the good and evil will be only known to the investigation of the antiquarian, Camp Curtin, with its memories and associations, will be immortal."*

- Governor Andrew Curtin, 1865

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**Camp Curtin Historical Society  
Annual Monument Clean-Up and  
Gettysburg Human Interest Stories Presentation  
Sunday - May 20, 2012 - Gettysburg National Military Park**

1:00PM – Meet at the Peace Light Memorial for our annual clean-up around the 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry Monument (right). Work clothes, shoes, gloves and trash bags suggested.



1:45PM – Gather back at the Peace Light Memorial for a one hour guided tour by CCHS President Jim Schmick and hear the fascinating human interest stories about several monuments. You do not have to participate in the clean-up to join in the tour.

For more information, contact Jim at [genjenkins@aol.com](mailto:genjenkins@aol.com) or call 717-732-5115.



**CCHS Upcoming Events - Mark your Calendars!**

**June 16-17 – Civil War Days**

**August 4 – CCHS Members' Picnic**

**September 9 – Harrisburg Cemetery Tours**

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*Cover: Our cover depict some of the "firsts" that occurred during the Civil War that are explored in our lead article, including repeating rifles, the Medal of Honor, the bugle call Taps, and ironclad warships.*

**Camp Curtin  
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# 1862 Civil War Innovations and Firsts

The Civil War is often called the first modern war because of the numerous technological and organizational innovations that were used for the first time. Several of these new ideas were introduced in 1862, including:

## IRONCLADS

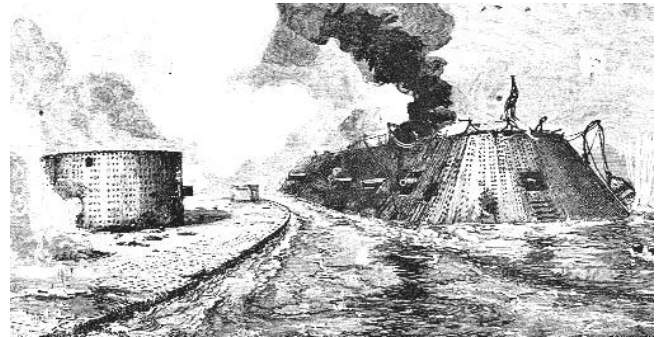
Prior to the Civil War, European navies had begun building ships with armor plating, but the war in America would mark the first time that ironclad ships met in battle. The Confederate government quickly realized that it was at a distinct disadvantage in terms of both military and merchant sea power. The South had few ships, sailors, shipyards, and the industry needed to support a naval armament and engine manufacture. Early on, the decision was made to construct ironclads to break the potential Northern blockade of Southern ports.

The first Confederate ironclad came as a result of the Union burning the Gosport Navy Yard at Norfolk, Va. Unfortunately, the destruction was incomplete and the Confederates captured large amounts of naval supplies and were able to raise the scuttled steam frigate *U.S.S. Merrimack*. Though damaged, this gave them a hull and steam engine as the base for the *C.S.S. Virginia*. A wooden casemate was built on the old ship's deck and covered with four inches of iron plate. She mounted six 9-inch and two 7-inch Dahlgren smoothbore cannons and two 6.4-inch Brooke rifles. The bow also mounted a ram to run into enemy ships. This basic design would be the template for most of the South's ironclads. The *Virginia* ultimately proved to be unseaworthy and was limited to the calm waters of bays and rivers. Also, the ship was underpowered and difficult to maneuver.

The Union responded to the Southern ironclad threat by calling for proposals for ironclads. The most innovative plan came from Swedish inventor John Ericsson. His revolving turret ship was unlike anything seen before. It had eleven inches of armor on the turret and mounted two 11-inch smoothbore Dahlgren guns. The ship was built in New York and commissioned as the *U.S.S. Monitor*.

On March 8, 1862, the *Virginia* sailed out to meet the Union fleet in Hampton Roads. She rammed and sank the *U.S.S. Cumberland*, set the *U.S.S. Congress* afire, and ran the *U.S.S. Minnesota* aground. After a hard day's work, the *Virginia* returned to port and planned to return the next day and finish the destruction.

To make the ship lighter and improve its maneuvering, all of its solid shot was off loaded.



The *Monitor* arrived at Hampton Roads after the *Virginia* withdrew. Its primary mission was to protect the *Minnesota* and the rest of the Union fleet. On March 9, the *Virginia* steamed out for what it thought would be a simple mopping up of the Union fleet. Instead it ran into the *Monitor* and the first battle between ironclads was on. For several hours the two ships pounded away at each other but neither managed to deal a deadly blow.

Both ships were operating under a handicap. The *Virginia* did not have the solid shot it needed to punch through the *Monitor's* armor. Since the *Monitor* was brand new and no one knew its capabilities, it was under orders to use half charges of powder. Thus, its shots were not hitting the *Virginia* with full force. Eventually, the *Virginia* withdrew, unable to damage the *Monitor* or break the blockade. The *Monitor* failed to sink the *Virginia*, but it succeeded in its mission to protect the *Minnesota* and maintain the blockade. Both ships ultimately came to a sad end. The *Virginia* was scuttled to keep it from being captured and the *Monitor* sank in a storm.

During the Civil War, the Union would commission 16 more monitors and 4 other ironclads for coastal service and 22 ironclads for the western rivers. The Confederacy would launch 24 ironclads. Although the outcome of the first battle between ironclads was somewhat inconclusive, they were the future of naval warfare.

## MEDAL OF HONOR

Prior to the Civil War, the military had no standard decorations or medals to honor bravery or service. During the American Revolution, George Washington had created the Award of Military Merit, a silk purple heart to be sewn on the breast of the uniform, but only three were awarded. This "patch" was never made a permanent award and was forgotten until 1932 when it was revived as the Purple Heart Medal.

During the Revolution and other wars, Congress did award specially struck gold medals to commanders for victories, usually showing the man's profile on the front and a battle scene on the back. These medals were not designed to be worn; they were about three inches in diameter and had no ribbon or pin. Lower ranking officers under the recipient's command were often given silver or bronze copies of the medal. Congressionally authorized gold medals are still presented today, usually to civilians for distinguished public service. The Mexican War saw the first award for the common soldier. Certificates of Merit were presented to those men who distinguished themselves in battle. Such an honor entitled the man to extra pay of two dollars per month.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed bills creating the Medal of Honor for the Army and Navy. It was to be awarded to non-commissioned officers and privates in the Army and petty officers, seamen, landsmen and marines in the Navy who distinguished themselves by gallantry in action and other soldierlike or seamanlike qualities, during the "present insurrection."

The Medal was a bronze star, point down, showing the goddess Minerva, representing the Union, fending-off Discord, representing the foul spirit of secession and rebellion. The ribbon was blue across the top, with red and white stripes below. The Army (above) and Navy (on cover) Medals differed only in the ribbon attachments. The Army used an eagle and crossed cannon barrels while the Navy used an anchor. The basic design of the star is still used by the Navy today, including having 34 stars representing the number of states in the Union in 1862.



In 1863, the legislation for the Army Medal of Honor was amended to change the requirements by limiting the distinguished acts to those "in action", thus eliminating the possibility of merely outstanding service in a noncombatant role. Additionally, officers became eligible for the Medal. In the Navy, officers did not become eligible until 1915 and "seamanlike" actions, such as lifesaving remained, eligible until 1943.

The first Medals of Honor to be presented went to the survivors of the 1862 Andrew's Raid – The Great Locomotive Chase - but the leader, James Andrews, was ineligible because he was a civilian. The first act during the Civil War that qualified for a Medal of Honor occurred on May 24, 1861. The Medal was presented in 1877 to Sgt. Francis Brownell for shooting and bayoneting the man who shot Colonel Elmer Ellsworth as he tore down a Confederate flag flying over a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia.

Tom Custer, George's brother, received two Medals of Honor during the Civil War, both for capturing Confederate flags. George Roosevelt, President Franklin Roosevelt's third cousin, served with the 26th Pennsylvania Infantry and received one Medal for two acts of bravery - rescuing his own regiment's color at 2nd Bull Run and capturing a Confederate color bearer and flag at Gettysburg. Flags were extremely important during the Civil War and about half of the recipients were honored for capturing an enemy flag or saving their own flag from capture.

Many of the Medals were awarded long after the War. From 1862 to 1917, 2,431 Medals of Honor were awarded for acts during the Civil War. Ultimately, 911 would be revoked in 1917 when standards were raised and the rolls cleared of undeserved presentations. This included the 864 medals presented to the 27th Maine Infantry for remaining in the defenses of Washington during the Gettysburg Campaign after their enlistments had expired and the 29 presented to the military escorts of the Lincoln funeral train.

Mary Walker, the only woman to receive the Medal, had hers revoked but it was restored by Congress in 1977.



## INCOME TAX

The first Federal income tax law was passed to help pay for the Union war effort during the summer of 1861. The House Ways and Means Committee drew up a bill to tax personal and corporate incomes. This bill called for a 3% tax on incomes over \$800. The bill quickly passed in both the House and the Senate as did other needed actions such as the law permitting the president to call for volunteers for three years service. The income tax law, however, was never put into operation but it laid the groundwork for another act the next year.

In 1862, Abraham Lincoln signed a bill that imposed a 3% tax on incomes between \$600 and \$10,000 and a 5% tax on higher incomes. This Act also established the office of Commissioner of Internal Revenue. The Commissioner was given the power to assess, levy, and collect taxes, and the right to enforce the tax laws through seizure of property and income and through prosecution. The powers and authority remain very much the same today.

In 1864, the tax schedule was modified to levy a tax of 5% on incomes between \$600 and \$5,000, 7.5% on incomes in the \$5,000-\$10,000 range and a 10% tax on higher incomes. The income tax law was repealed in 1872 when the revenue was deemed no longer needed by the Federal government.

The Confederate States also enacted an income tax in 1863. The South exempted the first \$1,000 in income. Earnings from \$1,000 to \$2,500 were taxed at 1% and 2% was taxed on all additional income.

Congress enacted a new income tax law in 1894 but the U.S. Supreme Court declared that an income tax was unconstitutional because it was not apportioned among the states in conformity with the Constitution. In 1913, the 16th Amendment to the Constitution made the income tax a permanent fixture in the U.S. tax system. The amendment gave Congress legal authority to tax income and resulted in a revenue law that taxed incomes of both individuals and corporations.

## OBSERVATION BALLOONS

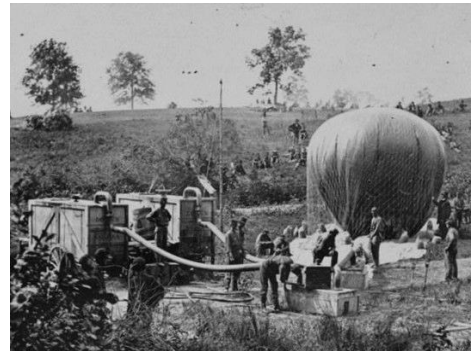
Balloons had been around for a century before the Civil War, primarily the tools of scientists and promoters. There had long been speculation as to their use in military operations but no major attempts had been made in the field.

Observation balloons made their appearance early in the war and even provided some intelligence for the First Battle of Bull Run-Manassas. Later in the summer of 1861, Thaddeus Lowe was named the "Chief Aeronaut" for the Union Army. Most balloons of the time were gas filled rather than today's familiar hot air. They were to be tethered to the ground, although some did break away, and on a clear day observers could see about thirty miles with a telescope.

Lowe obtained government funds to build seven balloons, twelve portable gas generators, and to convert a river steamer into a flat-topped balloon barge, perhaps the first "aircraft" carrier in history. The wagon-mounted gas generators that produced hydrogen gas freed the balloons from having to be filled at city gas works and towed to an observation point.

In March of 1862, Lowe accompanied the Army of the Potomac on the Peninsula Campaign (Gaines Mill, below). The balloons moved up the Peninsula with the troops and made numerous ascensions, taking officers aloft for reconnaissance of enemy operations. A telegraph operator went up with the balloon and sent instant information down to the ground that could be forwarded to nearby commanders.

The sight of the balloons caused the Confederates considerable consternation and forced them to take extra actions to hide their positions and movements.



Confederate General Porter Alexander later said that the Union should have kept the balloons simply for their nuisance value alone.

During the Peninsula Campaign, the Confederates made their own balloon, filled it with gas at the Richmond gas works and moved it by rail to the front. Later they moved it on the James River by steamer but the boat ran aground and the balloon was destroyed.

The 1862 Peninsula Campaign saw the most balloons and the greatest number of flights during the war. After McClellan's departure, Burnside and Hooker would make only slight use of the balloon corps and it would be disbanded in 1863.

## TAPS

The now famous bugle call *Taps* was composed during the Civil War. Many romantic legends have circulated about the origin of this evocative tune that is now mostly associated with military funerals and commemorative ceremonies.

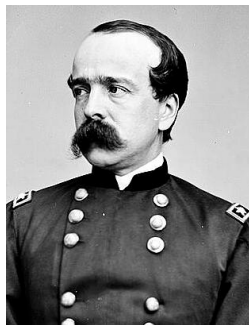


Unidentified Bugler

One widely told story says a Union officer found the notes on the dead body of his Confederate son and had it played when he buried his son and the tune spread throughout both armies. Though touching, there is no evidence that this story is true. Historian and former Air Force bugler at Arlington Cemetery, Jari Villanueva, has investigated the origin of *Taps* and concluded that Gen. Daniel Butterfield (below) composed the bugle call in July 1862 by modifying a previous bugle call.

As with many traditions and regulations in the United States Army, bugle calls were adapted from European armies. Two bugle calls were used to end the day for soldiers. *Tattoo* was sounded to alert the troops to return to camp to be ready for the roll call just before bedtime. Shortly after the roll call, the bugle would sound *Extinguish Lights* (also known as *Lights Out*), which ended the day. It was followed by three drum taps and these beats would ultimately become the nickname for the signal of the end of the day.

Butterfield (right) had been Colonel of the 12th Regiment of New York State Militia before the Civil War. The regiment used Gen. Winfield Scott's 1835 Infantry Tactics Manual as its drill manual and it included standard bugle calls, including *Tattoo* and *Extinguish Lights*. Thus, Butterfield would have been familiar with these bugle calls.



A new version of *Tattoo* came into use just before the Civil War and replaced Scott's older version. Most

buglers during the Civil War would have been familiar with the newer version of the bugle call.

Butterfield was interested in all aspects of army operations and even composed a special bugle call for his brigade to precede all bugle calls so that his units would know that the next call was for them and not be confused by calls meant for other units. Incidentally, Butterfield also developed the army corps insignia and flag system adopted by the Army of the Potomac in 1863. (See *The Bugle*, Spring 2007, available on website.)

Apparently, Butterfield did not care for the *Extinguish Lights* call and set about to create a new tune for the end of the day. He began by going back to Scott's old version of *Tattoo* and modifying it. In an 1898 letter, Oliver Norton of the 83rd Pennsylvania Infantry, who was serving as brigade bugler, described how he was called in to play the new call for the first time:

*One day, soon after the seven days battles on the Peninsula, when the Army of the Potomac was lying in camp at Harrison's Landing, General Daniel Butterfield, then commanding our Brigade, sent for me, and showing me some notes on a staff written in pencil on the back of an envelope, asked me to sound them on my bugle. I did this several times, playing the music as written. He changed it somewhat, lengthening some notes and shortening others, but retaining the melody as he first gave it to me. After getting it to his satisfaction, he directed me to sound that call for *Taps* thereafter in place of the regulation call. The music was beautiful on that still summer night, and was heard far beyond the limits of our Brigade. The next day I was visited by several buglers from neighboring Brigades, asking for copies of the music which I gladly furnished. I think no general order was issued from army headquarters authorizing the substitution of this for the regulation call, but . . . the call was gradually taken up through the Army of the Potomac. I have been told that it was carried to the Western Armies by the 11th and 12th Corps, when they went to Chattanooga in the fall of 1863, and rapidly made its way through those armies.*

Norton was probably not familiar with the old version of *Tattoo* and thought that Butterfield composed the tune for *Taps*. Butterfield never made the claim and said he merely modified Scott's *Tattoo*. The new bugle signal (also known as "Butterfield's Lullaby") was called "Taps" in common usage because it is used for the same purpose as the three drum taps. However the U.S. Army still called it *Extinguish Lights* and it did not officially change the name to *Taps* until 1891.

## REPEATING FIREARMS

Christian Spencer was a 19 year old Connecticut Yankee when he received his patent in 1860 for the most technologically advanced weapon to see large scale use during the Civil War. His carbines and rifles were 7 shot repeaters, loaded through an opening in the buttplate of the shoulder stock. The .52 caliber rim fire copper cartridges were self-contained, with bullet, gunpowder and primer.

The Spencer rifle was 47 inches long and weighed 10 pounds while the carbine was 39 inches long and weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces. A combination of Spencer's recent patent, his young age, and the feeling that repeaters would waste ammunition delayed introduction of the weapon.



The first Spencers were delivered in 1862 but in relatively small numbers. Only about 575 Spencers in the rifle length were at the Battle of Gettysburg in Custer's brigade that fought on the third day. Large deliveries of the carbines did not begin until October 1863 and by April 1865, about 46,000 Spencers would be in service. Between April and December 1865 another 49,000 were delivered but were not actually used in the war. The total of 95,000 Spencers purchased often leads authors to declare that it was the most commonly used carbine of the war when in actuality it was third after the Sharps and Burnside.

After the war many officers wanted the Spencer to remain the official weapon of the cavalry but it was replaced by the single shot "trapdoor" Springfield. Denied government contracts, Spencer's company went out of business in 1869.



Two other repeating long arms were used in the Civil War, the Colt revolving rifle (above) and the Henry

lever action rifle (below). About 11,000 of the Colts were made but they were unpopular because of the tendency for all of the cylinders to fire at once. The Colt revolving rifles and carbines used the same paper cartridge as pistols of the time. The Henry rifle was somewhat delicate and had a long exposed spring under its barrel that was subject to breakage and dirt. About 10,000 Henrys were made, with the U.S. Army buying only about 1,000. The remaining were purchased by states or individual units. Like the Spencer, the Henry used fixed ammunition. After the war, the Winchester Company would improve the weapon and the basic design is still popular today.



Interesting, the fixed ammunition used in the Spencers and Henrys could not be manufactured in the South because of its lack of modern machinery. Thus, if a Confederate captured one of the weapons, it was only good for as long as he had ammunition that he captured with it.

Repeating firearms were a great technological advance and would be the future of weaponry. Their impact during the Civil War, however, was minimal. At most approximately 67,000 repeaters were used in the war. When compared to 2.6 million single shot muzzle-loaded rifle muskets (U.S. Springfield, British Enfield, and Austrian Lorenz models) used by both sides, the repeater percentage is relatively small. The biggest impact may have been psychological. Imagine a Confederate soldier in the latter years of the war. The South is losing, casualties are rising, clothing and food are in short supply and then you learn of these new Northern "wonder weapons." You never personally encounter one in battle but you know if the war continues, you will encounter them. It had to be depressing!

*The Camp Curtin Historical Society and Civil War Round Table, Inc., is a non-profit corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Contributions are tax deductible under IRC Section 501c(3). The Society is properly registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State as a charitable organization. A copy of the registration and financial information may be obtained by telephoning toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

# Camp Curtin Descendant Brigade

Membership in the Camp Curtin Descendant Brigade is open to men, women and children (12 years of age or older) who are direct or collateral descendants of a soldier who passed through Camp Curtin from April 18, 1861 to November 11, 1865. Descendants of civilians who worked or volunteered at Camp Curtin are also eligible.



The application fee is \$25.00. Accepted members will receive a membership medal, membership certificate, and a one year membership in the Society. Subsequent dues will be \$15.00 per year.

Numerous Pennsylvania units passed through Camp Curtin as well as troops from Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, and the U.S. Regular Army. The Ladies Union Relief Association of Harrisburg is one of the civilian organizations that worked at Camp Curtin.

For more information and an application form, visit our website at [www.CampCurtin.org](http://www.CampCurtin.org) or telephone 717-732-5330.

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## Local History Book Available

*Civil War Harrisburg: A Guide to Capital Area Sites, Incidents and Personalities*, newly revised and enlarged this year is available for only \$13.00, tax and postage included.

Sixty new pages have been added to the previous edition, including articles on the coming of the Civil War, pre-war Harrisburg, Prince Albert's visit, Union flags, weapons, and army organization, and profiles of Generals Knipe, Geary, Reno and Gorgas.

Copies are available at our meetings or to order by mail, make your check for \$13.00 payable to "Camp Curtin Historical Society" and send to Camp Curtin Historical Society, Post Office Box 5601, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

# Camp Curtin 151st Anniversary

The 151 Anniversary of the opening of Camp Curtin on April 18, 1861, was marked by a ceremony on that same date and featured the announcement that the Camp Curtin Memorial-Mitchell United Methodist Church had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Camp Curtin Historical Society purchased the bronze plaque designating the honor and presented it to the Church. Below, CCHS President James Schmick, Church Pastor Andrew Bradley and James "Jeb" Stuart pose with the new plaque. Jeb did much of the work to secure the designation. The ceremony was coordinated by Jeremy Young, a Pennsylvania Historical Society intern from Millersville University.



## We need your email!

As you all know, mailing costs are increasing and it would help us greatly if we had everyone's email. We will be able to send you updates on Society activities and any changes in scheduling resulting from inclement weather (remember the floods in September and unexpected early snow storm in October?).

Rest assured, we will not share our email list with any other organization or business.

If you have an email, please send us a message at [CampCurtin@verizon.net](mailto:CampCurtin@verizon.net) so that we can add it to our list.