



Ozarks Civil War Weekly



Covering the Trans-Mississippi Theatre

December 16, 2016 #311

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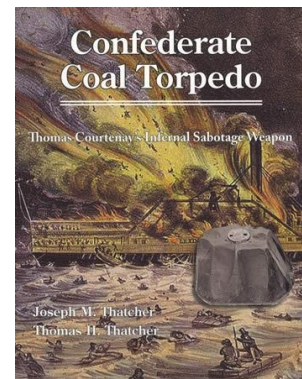
Editor's Note

Masthead photos : US Secretary of State William Seward, CSA Secretary of State Robert Toombs. Coal torpedo below.

Civil War Trivia

CONFEDERATE SECRET AGENTS AND THEIR WEAPONS

November 27, 1864 – An explosion and fire destroyed General Butler's headquarters steamer Greyhound, on the James River, Virginia, and narrowly missed killing Butler, Major General Schenck, and Rear Admiral Porter, on board for a conference on the forthcoming Fort Fisher expedition. Because of the nature of the explosion, it is likely that one of the deadly Confederate coal torpedoes had been planted in Greyhound's boiler. "The furnace door blew open," recalled Butler, "and scattered coals throughout the room." As Admiral Porter later described the incident: "We had left Bermuda Hundred five or six miles behind us when suddenly an explosion forward startled us, and in a moment large volumes of smoke poured out of the engine-room." The Admiral went on to marvel at the ingenuity which nearly cost him his life: "In devices for blowing up vessels the Confederates were far ahead of us, putting Yankee ingenuity to shame." This device was suspected of being the cause of several unexplained explosions during the war. The coal torpedo was invented by Capt. Thomas Edgeworth Courtenay of the Confederate Secret Service. The coal shell as Courtenay had named them, was intended to cause the boiler to rupture and to also scatter burning coals into the fireroom deck. They were never designed to blow a hole in the bottom of a vessel. The coal selected to make the patterns was of a size that a fireman would not need to break it up with his shovel first. The walls of the coal shell were about 3/8 inch thick, creating a hollow space inside sufficient to hold 3–4 ounces of gunpowder. After filling, the shell was closed with a threaded plug, then dipped in melted beeswax and rolled in coal dust, creating the appearance of a lump of coal. When shoved into the firebox amongst the coal, the resulting explosion would at the very least damage the boiler and render the engines inoperable. At worst, a catastrophic boiler explosion would kill crewmen, plus passengers, start a fire, perhaps, even sink the vessel.



US

Congress OKs bigger Petersburg National Battlefield, on track to be America's largest Civil War park

Trusts save 'bridge' tract between Chancellorsville, Wilderness

Four Frederick organization's received mini-grants from the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (Maryland)

Civil War Tech at Lincoln Library and Museum (Ill)

Personal Accounts of Sailors are Unique Entry Points into the Civil War | JHU Press (Maryland)

Civil War Monument Restoration Kickoff Event In Derby Dec. 8 | Valley Independent Sentinel (CT)

Civil War Round Table Christmas (NC)

Civil War living historians gather at Savannas Preserve State Park (Fla)

Civil War veteran's long-lost grave discovered in Cumberland County (NC)

Renowned Civil War historian to speak to roundtable (VA)

Derby Civil War monument to be restored (CT)

'Blood and Fury' offers 'good' Civil War analysis

[Civil War granddaughter encounters rare image of grandfather at museum \(Maryland\)](#)

[History lovers, families invited to Civil War battleground event \(NC\)](#)

[Harber's History: McFadden's Ford was a Civil War travesty \(Tenn\)](#)

[New book spotlights Indiana family's sacrifice in the Civil War](#)

[Navy veteran to tell the tales of two sunken battleships in the James River | Williamsburg Yorktown Daily \(VA\)](#)

[Hayes library, descendants visit Middletown, where president recovered after Civil War injury \(Maryland\)](#)

Minnesota

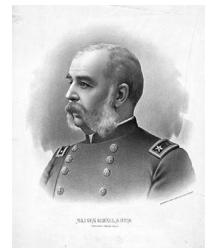
[Civil War paintings will head back to prime Capitol spot](#)

[Civil War paintings to remain on display at Capitol](#)

[Civil War paintings returning to Minnesota Capitol](#)

Kansas

[VIP quarters named for long-serving soldier \(Fort Leavenworth\)](#)



Washington

[Honoring a forgotten Civil War veteran | Kent Reporter](#)

[Forgotten Civil War vet, wife receive proper burial](#)

US

The battle is over: Institute for Advanced Study reaches deal with Civil War Trust on sacred section of battlefield

Institute For Advanced Study And Civil War Trust Announce Agreement To Expand The Princeton Battlefield State Park While Meeting Institute Housing Needs

N.C. Civil War History Center gets city pledge

Gravesite of Civil War soldier moved to Robeson County (NC)

Christmastime during the Civil War (NC)

N.C. Civil War History Center gets city pledge (NC)

Ledger, Civil War uniform find their home at historical society (NY)

Local author Thomas J. Ryan wins Gettysburg book award (Del)

Civil War surrender to Rebels helped define York (PA)

York Civil War Round Table Announces 2017 Schedule (PA)

Joan Griffis/Illinois Ancestors: Civil War materials digitized and online (Ill)

Robertson, renowned Civil War historian, to speak to roundtable (VA)

Civil War Roundtable (Clarksville, Tenn)

(Ad)

[Civil war magazine | Compare Prices at NexTag](#)

Japan

[Yokosuka students, Shiloh sailors get lesson in Civil War drumming](#)



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