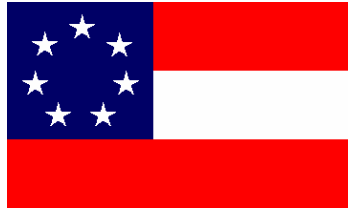
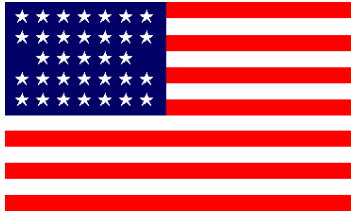


# CIVIL WAR AUTHOR WALTER COFFEY

## OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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### FROM THE AUTHOR

Hello again from my writing cave in Houston, Texas! I'm moving right along on my fourth novel, which is tentatively named *The Confederate Trust*. This novel features Union agent J.B. Carver as he investigates a plot to sabotage the U.S. Navy in New Orleans. Moving along the timeline of the war, the novel opens shortly after the fall of Fort Donelson (late February 1862) and should end around the end of April which, as you Civil War experts know, is when New Orleans falls. Will Carver make it to see the fall of New Orleans? You'll have to wait until the book is done.

In the span of February to April 1862, many significant events took place in the war. In March 1862, the first battle between ironclad warships in world history took place off Hampton Roads, Virginia. In the Eastern Theater, General George McClellan began the U.S. invasion of the Virginia peninsula between the York

and James River at his customary snail's pace. And in the Western Theater, General Ulysses S. Grant was attacked at a little church called Shiloh near the Tennessee-Mississippi border.

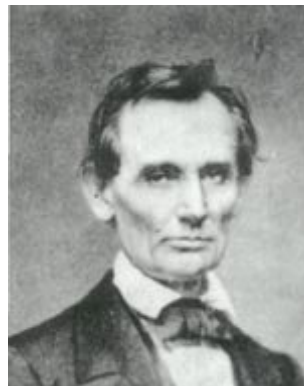
Up to that time, the Battle of Shiloh was the costliest battle in U.S. history. Nearly 25,000 men were killed, wounded or missing, which was more than all previous U.S. wars combined. Although it was a Union victory, many in the North called for Grant's head after reading the overwhelming casualty lists. However President Lincoln stood by his general, saying, "I can't spare this man... he fights."

I'm still in the process of finalizing my novel outline and working through my first draft, but it would be interesting to see if Carver somehow found his way onto the Shiloh battlefield and participated in this horrible confrontation. Stay tuned for more details in the months to come.

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### MARCH 1861: LINCOLN INHERITS A CRISIS

In 1861, March opened with tension and trepidation. The United States were now divided with seven Southern states having established their own federal government. In the North, events seemed suspended as the Buchanan administration prepared to leave office and the new Lincoln administration, the first Republican administration in U.S. history, prepared to enter. In the South, many celebrated the birth of their new country but wondered what would happen next. Would the North leave them to secede in peace? If not, could they avoid military conflict in sustaining their new nation? What would President-elect Abraham Lincoln's policy be? Could the South receive foreign



-- Abraham Lincoln,  
16<sup>th</sup> U.S. President.  
When he was  
inaugurated on March  
4, 1861, he inherited the  
greatest crisis in U.S.  
history as seven states  
had already seceded  
from the Union.

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recognition, which was vital to their economic survival? This month opened with many questions but few answers.

In Washington, there was concern over a potential Southern military attack, rioting or even assassination as Lincoln's inauguration drew near. Sharpshooters and military personnel were stationed throughout the capital as Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4 without incident. In his inaugural address, Lincoln pledged not to attack the South without the South attacking first. He argued that secession was illegal, thus all secession ordinances were null and void, and any Southern aggression would be interpreted as a rebellion against the U.S. government. Lincoln declared to the South: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. You can have no conflict, without yourselves being the aggressors."

The Confederacy sent commissioners to Washington to negotiate with the Lincoln administration on a peaceful separation. Lincoln instructed his Secretary of State, William Seward, not to see the commissioners, as that would symbolize recognition of the Confederacy as a separate nation. And to do that would be to admit that the Southern secession was valid, something Lincoln would not accept. Besides, Lincoln had another issue at hand that was far more pressing – the crisis at Fort Sumter.

The fort in Charleston Harbor was occupied by U.S. forces under Major Robert Anderson and was surrounded by Confederate batteries. Anderson's men were isolated from supplies and communication to the

North. The day after his inauguration, Lincoln received word from Anderson that he would need 20,000 men and provisions to keep the fort from falling into Confederate hands.

This posed a dilemma for Lincoln. If he reinforced Fort Sumter, the Confederacy would consider it an act of war, making Lincoln the instigator and aggressor in the conflict. If he surrendered the fort, the North would consider it an act of cowardice and possibly demand Lincoln's removal. If he did nothing, the U.S. troops in the fort would be starved into submission.

Throughout the month, Lincoln conferred with his Cabinet and General-in-Chief Winfield Scott about Fort Sumter. Many of Lincoln's Cabinet members thought the fort should be evacuated to avoid provoking a war. If Lincoln fulfilled Anderson's request to send men and provisions, General Scott believed it would take dozens of warships and transports, which would certainly provoke a war. As the month waned, a decision needed to be made.

Finally on March 31, Lincoln acted. He ordered that supplies be sent to the U.S. forces in Fort Sumter, but no additional men or war materiel. In this way, he could keep U.S. control of the fort without provoking a military conflict since merely sending provisions could not be construed as a hostile act. If the South wanted Fort Sumter, Lincoln reasoned, they would have to fire the first shot.

As the relief expedition prepared to sail for South Carolina, people in both the North and South held their breath. How the relief expedition would be received by the Confederates in Charleston would determine whether or not there would be a war.

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### U.S. HISTORY:

#### DEFEAT AT BATAAN LEADS TO INFAMOUS DEATH MARCH

On March 11, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered General Douglas MacArthur to withdraw from the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines in the face of overwhelming Japanese forces during World War II. MacArthur left behind a contingent of Filipino and U.S. troops and vowed, "I shall return."

As Japanese forces closed in, the final stage of the Battle of Bataan occurred on April 9 when approximately 68,000 Filipino and 12,000 U.S. troops under Major General Edward "Ned" P. King, Jr.



-- *Casualties of the Bataan Death March.*

formally surrendered. The troops had held out on the peninsula

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for three months, and many were starved and disease-ridden. This was the largest single surrender of a military force in U.S. history.

The Japanese High Command had expected the fight to continue and thus was not prepared to transport so many prisoners to the prisoner-of-war camps. As a result the surrendered prisoners were force-marched from Bataan to San Fernando, which covered a distance of anywhere between 90 and 120 miles. The march was conducted in deep dust over vehicle-broken macadam roads, and thousands died en route from disease, starvation, dehydration, heat exhaustion, untreated wounds and execution.

During the march, prisoners were subjected to random abuse, torture and murder. They were denied promised sustenance, and often limited to one bowl of rice per day and no fresh water. Other acts of brutality included beheadings, cut throats, shootings, bayonet stabbings, rapes, disembowelments and rifle butt beatings. Those who fell behind were usually executed or left to die as the sides of the roads became littered with dead bodies and those begging for help.

Prisoners who fell or could not continue marching were

murdered. Japanese trucks deliberately drove over some who fell. On occasion, riders in passing vehicles casually extended their bayonets and slashed the throats of marching prisoners as the vehicle drove by. Thousands died in the continual six-day trek that became known as the "Bataan Death March."

The exact death count cannot be determined but historians estimate the minimum count to be between 6,000 and 11,000. Post-war Allied reports estimated that only 54,000 of the 72,000 prisoners reached their destination. This did not include those who later died in the prison camps as a result of the march.

While the Japanese victory at Bataan secured Japan's domination of the South Pacific, the tide ultimately turned in the Allies' favor. General MacArthur made good on his pledge to return to the Philippines, and Japan was finally defeated in August 1945. After Japan's surrender, an Allied commission convicted General Homma of war crimes for allowing the atrocities during the Bataan Death March to occur. The general pleaded ignorance of the high death toll but he was executed on April 3, 1946 outside Manila. The Bataan Death March gave the Allies motivation to stem the Japanese tide in the South Pacific, and it became a rallying point for many of the U.S.-led Allied victories that would follow.

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### BOOK REVIEW:

#### ***THE BLOODY SHIRT: TERROR AFTER APPOMATTOX* by Stephen Budiansky**

Journalist and military historian Stephen Budiansky (*Her Majesty's Spymaster*) pulls no punches in this hard-hitting examination of the most sordid aspects of Reconstruction in the South from 1865 to 1876. The brutal war of terrorist violence that he surveys certainly has not escaped the history books. But this worthy effort goes a long way toward highlighting the most venal aspects of how, in the 10 years after the Civil War, the white Southern power structure managed to erect the Jim Crow laws that for nearly a century legalized many aspects of racial discrimination.

Budiansky also highlights men and women of courage,

idealism, rectitude and vision who confronted the establishment: Pennsylvania-born U.S. Army major Lewis Merrill, who fought the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina; Prince Rivers, a former slave and Union army Colored Troop sergeant who became a state legislator and trial judge in South Carolina; and Maine-born Adelbert Ames, a Union general who served as Mississippi's provisional military governor. Budiansky brings the unpleasant details of the era alive in a smoothly written narrative.

Review courtesy of *Publisher's Weekly*. This book is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).