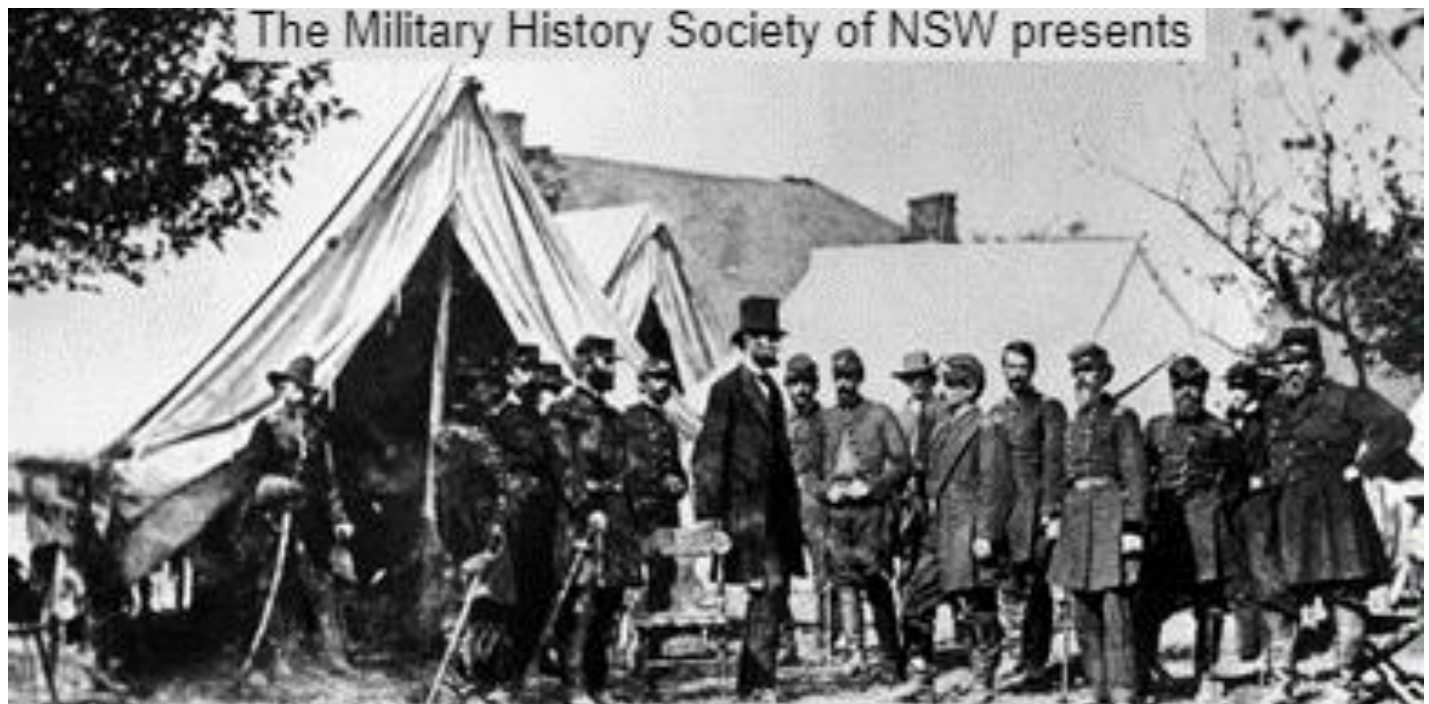


The Military History Society of NSW presents



PENINSULA CAMPAIGN OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
The Equation Changes, March-July 1862

Public Lecture by John Morrison
10:30AM Saturday 5 October 2024
Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Sydney CBD

Despite success with blockade of Southern Ports and in the Western Theatre and Mississippi Valley, the first major battle of the Civil War, First Bull Run/Manassas in July 1861, was a humiliating defeat for the Union. Despite superior numbers and resources, the Union Army was humiliated, disorganized and morale had plummeted. Enter General George Brinton McClellan, "Little Mac", who transformed the demoralized Union Army of the Potomac. But by late 1861, there was no indication of how or when he might strike against the Confederate army nearby at Manassas, leading President Abraham Lincoln to press the general for a plan of action against the Confederate capital in Richmond. The result was the Peninsula Campaign – one of the war's most pivotal events.

McClellan believed Richmond held the fate of the Confederacy, but rather than march overland toward the Confederate capital he proposed a move against Richmond using the York-James Peninsula of Virginia – one of two major approaches to the Confederate capital at Richmond. McClellan thought that by using Fort Monroe (the only fort in the Upper South not to fall into Confederate hands) as a base, "the Army of the Potomac could march against Richmond with complete security, altho' with less celebrity and brilliancy of results, up the Peninsula."

The plan represented a sound strategic concept – employing a shrewd exploitation of Union naval superiority, since gunboats could protect flanks and river steamers could carry troops toward the Confederate capital. And since Richmond was vital to the Confederacy, the Confederate Army would have to give battle to the North.

But there were limitations. The Chickahominy River ran roughly through the middle of the northern Peninsula near Richmond. Limited fords and crossings necessitated dividing the army at some stages. Only one adequate supply line existed for the Upper Peninsula – the Richmond & York River Railroad – which became McClellan’s lifeline. The terrain lent itself to defense by a small force – especially one that knew the region well (as many Confederates did).

But perhaps most seriously, the Union had underestimated Confederate ingenuity and fighting spirit.

TIME AND VENUE: 10:30AM Saturday, 5 October 2024 at The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Hyde Park South, corner Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, Sydney CBD. Admission is free of charge but a donation would be appreciated. For information call 0419 698 783 or email: president@militaryhistorynsw.com.au

Speaker Biography – John J Morrison
BSc(Hons), PhD, Cert Health Econ, Grad Cert Pharmacecon, CCRA, CCRT

John Morrison is a graduate of the University of Queensland with an Honours degree in Microbiology and a PhD in Immunology and Toxinology. He also holds qualifications in Health Economics. He has worked as a Research Scientist at the University of Queensland and at CSIRO, and has also served as a Scientific Officer with the Australian Army Medical Corps – conducting both pre-clinical research as well as field trials of anti-malarial drugs in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In 1989 he joined the Australian biomedical products industry and has extensive clinical research and development management experience gained over more than 30 years in various Industry positions – from small local start-up Biotechnology Companies to large multi-national Pharmaceutical Companies.



He served with the Australian Army Medical Corps as a reservist for 25 years, with his most recent position being on the Surgeon General’s Staff as Staff Officer II and (briefly SO I) responsible for helping co-ordinate Human Research projects and the Australian Defence Human Research Ethics Committee (ADHREC). He was jointly responsible for establishing a system of pre-ADHREC evaluation of the suitability of research submissions, as well as drafting the Terms of Reference and preliminary guidelines for establishing a Scientific Subcommittee for ADHREC. He was also involved in reviewing, evaluating, and suggesting improvements for the first version of the National Ethics Application Format (NEAF). He also has accreditation and experience in Research Governance and Quality Assurance and has conducted clinical audits and evaluations at all stages of product development in a number of countries. His last appointment (from 2020 - 2023) was as head of Research Governance and Quality Assurance at the Black Dog Institute for Mental Health

John’s pastimes include ballroom dancing, public speaking and most especially military history. He is an avid traveler and enjoys nothing more than visiting historical battlefields and studying old military campaigns – his particular areas of interest being the American Civil War and the ANZAC campaigns of the First World War. In addition to the Military History Society of NSW, he is also a member of the Company of Military Historians and the Sydney Chapter of the American Civil War Roundtable – of which he is currently Program Director.