

Country Squires- Minutes of Meeting on August 13, 2026

President Don Elliott began the meeting at 12 noon and offered as Words of Inspiration those of well-known sports writer Grantland Rice- 'It's not whether you win or lose, but how you played the game'.

After luncheon, the minutes of the July 9th meeting were approved unanimously. Bruce Johnson introduced guests- Fran O'Neill and Peter Stone, and Gil Watson introduced guest Doug Kerr.

Country Squire Ambassador Tom Hull was our speaker. His topic- *The End of a Naval Era: The Kearsarge & The Alabama*- was the last battle of sailing ships that occurred on June 11, 1894 off the coast of France at Cherbourg. The brief battle, witnessed at sea by thousands of French, was a challenge match by USS Kearsarge's Capt Winslow to CSS Alabama's Capt Semmes that some records call "The sinking of the Confederate commercial raider" as it was responsible for capturing or destroying 65 merchant ships during a 2 yr. period of the Civil War.

Tom's interest in The Alabama was inspired during his posting in South Africa upon hearing a choral group singing "Daar Kom Die Alabama", commemorating The Alabama's blockade of Capetown. He shared a recording of the song along with his research into the interesting history of both The Alabama and The Kearsarge, showing pictures of both vessels and their crews as well as Edouard Manet's painting of the battle scene. An interesting fact (somewhat relevant to current affairs ?) is that claims for The Alabama's damages were settled in 1871 by the Treaty of Washington with an option of \$15.5 million in gold or the country of Canada!!!

While Tom reported that, while the sailing schooner USS Kearsarge was wrecked off the coast of Nicaragua in 1894, its name has been carried on by subsequent US battleships, aircraft carriers and today an amphibious troop carrier.

Program Chair Dave Wood thanked Tom and awarded him, as well as his technical assistant grandson Colin, CS coffee mugs!!

The meeting adjourned at 1:20PM.

By Art Scutro, Acting Secretary
8/31/2026