

# GENERAL ORDERS



The Newsletter of the

**Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.  
and The Iron Brigade Association**



February 9, 2017

Bob O'Neill

## STUART'S CHRISTMAS RAID OF 1862

*I would rather be a private in Virginia's army than a general in any army that was going to coerce her.*

*I shall strive to inculcate in my men the spirit of the chase.*

J.E.B. Stuart

The Christmas Raid is notable for two reasons: the raid marked the beginning of John Mosby's career as a partisan ranger, and Stuart's audacity left a lasting mark on the Union psyche. Rather than discussing John Mosby, our February speaker, Bob O'Neill, will discuss the Christmas Raid in some detail, including the purpose of the raid, the attacks on Union outposts at the towns of Dumfries and Occoquan, Virginia, the very successful Union response and the brief skirmish near Fairfax Court House. Our speaker, Bob O'Neil, will explain the forgotten result of the raid – the fear of another raid on the capital.

Our February speaker's talk is drawn from his book *Chasing Jeb Stuart and John Mosby*. Stuart's earlier raids in June and October 1862 had humiliated Maj. Gen. George McClellan and his Army of the Potomac, while his Catlett Station Raid in August 1862 had embarrassed Maj. Gen. John Pope and his Army of Virginia. Stuart's Christmas Raid was less successful than these earlier forays. The raid received little press coverage at the time, and Stuart would not write his report of the affair until February 1864.

Stuart had, in his two Rides around McClellan, avoided, to the extent possible, engaging Union troops. In his Christmas Raid he challenged the Union troops defending the capital, choosing to go right through their lines rather than around them. In doing so he came within sight of the inner fortifications ringing the city. Union commanders never forgot Stuart's challenge.

Thus, when a report reached the Union high command in May 1863, that Confederate cavalry was planning to kidnap President Abraham Lincoln and members of his cabinet, the threat could not be ignored. This "phantom raid" to kidnap Lincoln consumed the War Department, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker and Maj. Gen. Samuel Heintzelman, commanding the Department of Washington, from mid-May until after the opening shots were fired at Gettysburg. The most famous counter-measures were, mistakenly, linked to John Mosby by Joseph Hooker, and accepted by Mosby historians ever since.

Bob will dust off this forgotten "phantom raid" and place the Union response within the context of the Gettysburg Campaign.

Bob O'Neill grew up in Detroit before moving to Northern Virginia in 1977. He worked as a patrol officer and detective for the Fairfax County Police Department for 26 years, retiring in 2002. He and his wife then moved to Eureka, Montana, where they had built a home several years earlier. They returned to Virginia in 2012 and now reside in King George County, south of Fredericksburg.

Bob has published two books – *Small But Important Riots, The Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville* in 1993 and *Chasing Jeb Stuart and John Mosby, The Union Cavalry in Northern Virginia from Second Manassas to Gettysburg* in 2012.

He has also published articles for Virginia Country's Civil War, Blue & Gray, North & South, Gettysburg Magazine and Little Big Horn Associates Research Review. His most recent article for Blue & Gray covers Gen. George Crook's early 1876 campaigns against the Sioux and Cheyenne, including the battles at Powder River and Rosebud Creek. This was published in August 2015.

Bob has guided numerous tours of the cavalry battlefields in the Loudon Valley, as well as several tours for America's History LLC, to include Custer related tours in Montana, Wyoming and Kansas. He has also co-guided a John Mosby tour for the Blue & Gray Education Society.

## General Orders No. 2-17

February 2017

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### February Meeting at a Glance

[Jackets required for the dining room.]

**Wisconsin Club**

9<sup>th</sup> and Wisconsin Avenue

6:15 p.m. - Registration/Social Hour

6:45 p.m. - Dinner

**[\$30 by reservation, please]**

Reservations are accepted until

Monday, February 6, 2017

7:30 p.m. - Program

**Speaker and topic are subject to change. In case of inclement weather, listen to WTMJ or WISN for meeting status.**

### 2016-2017 Speaker Schedule

Find the speaker schedule on page 7.

# Civil War Round Table News

## When Reservations are Cancelled

Please be aware that cancellations of dinner reservations within 48 hours of the meeting are subject to payment in full. The MCWRT is charged for these dinners whether they are used or not!

## Your Cooperation is Appreciated

“Walk-in dinner” requests are sometimes difficult to honor. Remember, dinner reservations are to be made at least 48 hours prior to the meeting date. We are always happy to accommodate where possible, but we cannot always guarantee a dinner that evening if you have not called in or emailed your reservation. Thank you for your understanding.

## Special Dietary Needs

We have quite a number of regular members who have opted for special entrees as options to the regular dinner being served. The Wisconsin Club and the Round Table will make every effort to meet any special dietary needs you may have. As a courtesy, **please give a reminder when making your reservations**, so we don't forget to serve you what you're expecting!

[milwaukeecwrt.org](http://milwaukeecwrt.org)



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY,  
MR. LINCOLN!**

**FEBRUARY 12**

*In the end, it's not the years in your life that count.  
It's the life in your years. A. Lincoln*

## The Muster Roll: NEW MEMBERS

TABLE II--CONSOLIDATED LIST of all persons of Class II, subject to the military law in the United States, and of persons of Class III, subject to the military law in the United States, who were members of the Muster Roll during the month of \_\_\_\_\_, 1916, under direction of \_\_\_\_\_, Provost Marshal.

NUMBER	NAME	AGE	STATUS	PLACE OF BIRTH	PLACES WHERE RESIDENT	EDUCATION
1	William H. Smith	44	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
2	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
3	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
4	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
5	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
6	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
7	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
8	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
9	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School
10	George A. Smith	36	White	Illinois	Illinois	High School

## MCWRT Annual Fund

The following members have made a generous commitment to the MCWRT by investing in that fund. This list reflects those donations made from July 1, 2016 through December 10, 2016.

### Major Contributor (\$500 and above)

#### Patron (\$200 - \$499)

Crain Bliwas, Eugene & Jane Jamrozy,  
Stephen Leopold, Robert Parrish

#### Associate (\$100 - \$199)

Tom Corcoran, Robert Dude, Paul Eilbes, Bill Finke,  
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Jean Jacobsohn, David Jordan, Jerome Kowalski,  
Dr. Ray Pahle, Jim & Ann Reeve, Laura Rinaldi,  
Dennis Slater, Paul Sotirin, Gil Vraney,  
Bernard VanDinter

#### Contributor (up to \$99)

Darwin Adams, George Affeldt, T. James Blake, Jim  
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Dr. Erwin Huston, Allan Kasprzak, Jerome Kowalski,  
Christopher E. Johnson, Ardis Kelling, Jay Lauck,  
Fredric Madsen, Jerry & Donna Martynski,  
Robin Martin, Kathleen McNally, James Melchior,  
Herb Oechler, John Rodahl, Chet Rohn, Dan Tanty,  
Fred Wendorf

## A DIME WELL SPENT

by Ted Savas

I don't think there is a better way to spend an hour on a Saturday morning than with your children perusing old books at one of the sales at Oak Ridge High School.

My ardor for books is boundless. When I was a kid my friends carried around sports cards; I was a card-carrying member of the HBC (History Book Club). They went fishing; I went to the library. They hung around school lockers and talked; I ducked into empty classrooms to finish reading (or writing) a short story. If there was a book sale within 50 miles, I was there. Naturally, one of my adult obsessions has been whether my kids would be as smitten with dusty old books as their papa.

Whole trees fall to the ax to satisfy my 11-year old daughter Alex's unquenchable thirst for ink-based adventure. And my polar opposite 7-year old son Demetrious? He loves it when I read to him – but picking up a book on his own and losing himself in another world seemed a lost cause.

**This feature is continued on page 11.**



In February 1957, Frank L. Byrne talked to the membership on “Libby Prison – A Study in Emotion.”

George L. Cashman was our Round Table speaker in February 1967, speaking on “Lincoln Denied Rest in Sleep.”

“Jackson’s Valley Campaign” was the topic of Lowell Reidenbaugh’s presentation to the Round Table in February 1977.

Dr. Frederick I. Olson spoke to the Round Table in February 1987 about “Lincoln Side Roads.”

In February 1997, Bruce Allardice discussed “Generals: The Famous and Not-So Famous.”

At last year’s February meeting Don H. Doyle spoke to the members on “The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War.”

## Other Kenosha Civil War Museum Events

### The Civil War Expo and Nineteenth Century Makers Day

**Saturday, March 11, 2017, 11 am – 3 pm**

Watch demonstrations and buy goods from metal smiths, beekeepers, and other modern makers influenced by trades and crafts of the past. Visit with living history, heritage groups, and Civil War Round Tables from around the Midwest who present samples of their programming and have informational tables set up throughout the Museum.

### Civil War Museum Campaign Tour 2017

**October 22 – 25, 2017**

- **Fredericksburg**
- **Chancellorsville**
- **The Wilderness**
- **Spotsylvania**

Early Bird registration prior to April 7, 2017:

Museum members - \$630 per person double occupancy  
\$795 per person single occupancy  
Non-members - \$675 per person double occupancy  
\$840 per person single occupancy

Full details can be found at:

[www.kenosha.org/wp-civilwar/events/](http://www.kenosha.org/wp-civilwar/events/)

**[milwaukeeecwrt.org](http://milwaukeeecwrt.org)**

## Kenosha Civil War Museum Second Friday Lunchbox Series

The series is a free program sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and Iron Brigade Association.

### Where Soldiers Fought and Slaves Slept: Civil War Student Adventures

**Friday, February 10, 2017, Noon**

**Presented by: Chris Lese and Students from Marquette University High School**

Mr. Lese and his students have taken immersive Civil War trips for the past several years. This program will describe these trips and might give you some ideas for your own Civil War adventure.

### The Luck of the Merrimack

**Friday, March 10, 2017, Noon**

**Presented by: David Noe**

It’s a well-known fact that sailors believed in either a lucky or unlucky ship. The *USS Merrimack*, and later as the *CSS Virginia*, had plenty of luck, both good and bad. Twice in her relatively short life bad luck resulted in her sinking at the hands of her own crew. See how both good and bad luck played an important part in the ship’s life and how more or less of either could have changed history as we know it.



### Abraham Lincoln Presidential Birthday Celebration

**Sunday, February 12, 2017, Noon – 3 pm**

Celebrate the 208th birthday of President Lincoln, as portrayed by Mr. George Buss who will speak to the crowd and deliver his famous Gettysburg Address at 1 pm. Children of all ages can participate in Lincoln related crafts, games, and stories and sample some of the president’s favorite refreshments.

### Ambrose Armitage’s Diary

**Saturday, February 18, 2017, 1:30 pm**

Mrs. Rita Dow will discuss soldier Ambrose Armitage who was with the 8th Wisconsin Infantry. He was in the color guard of the famous “Abe the War Eagle Regiment.” Her first person interpretation is from the point of view of Ambrose’s sister, Fanny Armitage. She will use original experiences listed in Ambrose’s diary and letters home.

### Civil War Medical Weekend

**Saturday, February 18, 2017, 10 am – 4 pm**

**Sunday, February 19, 2017, Noon – 4 pm**

Join the Museum for a weekend of living history, programs, and exhibits commemorating the role of physicians, nurses, and caregivers during the Civil War. Surgeons and nurses of the 17th Corps Medical Staff will set up camp inside where they will demonstrate a variety of surgical techniques. Participate in a medical inspection for new recruits and role play as a sick soldier during the camp’s sick call demonstration.



**Letter from Charlie Dow**  
**Camp Tillinghast, Va.**  
**February 1, 1862**

Friend Sam— On the margin on the Register I received from you last evening I found the following: “Why don’t you write to me?—Sam” well if that is your request here goes.

If you will take the pains to imagine your humble servant acting Serg’t of the guard and at present seated in one corner of a log guard house which is warmed by an old fashioned fire-place with about twenty of the boys around him dancing, singing, playing cards, telling stories, &c, &c, you will have my exact position to a T.

Although we are comfortably situated in our log shanty, it is anything but pleasant out of doors, either under foot or over head. Last night snow fell to the depth of one inch and today the rain has fell to the depth of about two inches. Now take this in connection with the mud we had to start with (about a foot) and we have a mixture that a weak man cannot waddle through very easily. By the way, speaking of mud reminds me of a little incident that happened last Thursday and here it is. A certain corporal went to the city to see what few sights there is to be seen there and in his wanderings about town, and before he was ready to return to camp night overtook him and that too in a how came yer eye out condition, but as luck would have it he came across an old chum who was all right, spiritually speaking, and for short we will call him Ike. After a short consultation they came to the conclusion that camp was the place for them and for it they started. They got along finely as far as the river and even across the river; but then came the pull back for two good miles were between them and camp and the mud knee deep in places and the night as dark as a stack of black cats. They had grouped their way along but a few rods when the corporal got mired and in helping himself and being helped out of his dilemma, he lost one of his boots in the mud and could not find it. They had gone but a few rods farther when they came to a hut which was occupied by a negro. Now what do you guess they done? Why just this; they made the “n--” pull one of his boots off – which the corporal put on – and then take a lantern and light them to camp at least one mile and a half, which he did and that too with only one boot on, the other foot being bare. The corporal was a little the rough looking “seed” the next morning I ever saw and to all appearances he had more load the night before than he could carry and undertook to draw it; for evidently he had been down on all fours a good share of the time.

We have not done anything except guard duty for a long time, and all on account of the mud. Drills have been entirely out of the question and as for Dress Parades, they are getting to be among the things that were. The last one we had was Jan. 14th.

We could not go on Picket when it was our turn, consequently the advance regiment had to do our duty for us. Reason why – mud.

We are not like the little boy who cried “more mud” but directly the opposite. Some people suppose we are suffering by the cold weather. Never was one more mistaken – I do not think the thermometer has indicated as low as ten degrees above zero this winter; and as for the snow that has fell here, it would not exceed three inches in depth on the level, all told. Last night was the heaviest fall at any one time. We have plenty of blankets to keep warm with and when our day’s labor is done and the time comes to “turn in”, there is some of the gayest bed-making that could possibly be imagined. The days of the “cutting bench” are nowhere in comparison. But with all its faults (the bench), I love it still. Generally, about the time we get fairly wrapped up in our U.S. sheets, the buglers of the cavalry regiment close by sound their “taps” which makes me think sometimes of the old song, “Toot away, you fifin’ feller” &c. and after cracking a smile to myself in remembrance of the days gone by, I drop into the arms of Morpheus and only awake to consciousness at the sound of reveille in the morning.

“Turn out the guard! I’ll see whether my order will be obeyed or not” is the order of the officer of the day. Leave the sergeant in command. Whew! I wonder what’s up? I will let you know shortly. Well the thing is did and result is two of the N.Y. 12th boys are safely quartered in our cottage on the Potomac. They would dance and now they are paying the fiddler. They are good boys undoubtedly but in hard luck. That’s what the matter.

Since writing the above, I have had a talk with Private Marshall of Company “B” who was one of the prisoners taken at Bull Run and soon after confined in one of the Hotels de Tobacco in Richmond and from him I learned the following:

He made good his escape from the prison which he was confined in on Christmas evening in company with another prisoner and after loitering round the city for several days taking notes, he took “Westward Ho” for a motto and shaped his course accordingly.

The result was he traveled several days under different disguises – sometimes a cattle buyer, sometimes a wood buyer, then an agent for some Southern firm and, at all times, a Yankee and bound to win. After perambulating about rebeldom to his heart's content and had gathered all the information he could of the “doings,” he took another motto, which was Northward, Git! and after considerable engineering and hard labor, he brought up the position of a soldier before Gen. Rosecrans, all O.K. The General detained him three or four days as a “Tartar” but when he found out he was sound, he provided him with a pass to Washington and even gave him some of Uncle Sam's filthy lucre for the “Southern Scrip” which Marshall had, exchanging even up. Marshall has been under the questioning process of Gen. McClellan for the past three days but has now returned to camp.

He says there are no fortifications about Richmond whatever – not a cannon mounted there – but at Centerville they have two hundred and sixty Siege guns mounted and the fortifications in every position are strong.

Home Again- Last week we chronicled the release of Willie H. Upham from his imprisonment at Richmond; this week we have a more pleasing notice, of his return to Racine. He arrived on Monday and looks hearty as ever. From him we learn what befell him after the time he was lost sight of on the battlefield, when carried wounded by his comrades to the temporary hospital.

In about half an hour the rebels took possession of the building placing a guard over the wounded. They were left with their wounds undressed until Wednesday, three days after the battle! Then a company of surgeons came down from Manassas, dressed their wounds and they were carted to Manassas Junction, shipped in cattle cars to Richmond being thirty-six hours on the way, crowded and almost suffocating. On their arrival at Richmond they were placed in a Tobacco factory from which, until released to return home, he and his fellow prisoners were never permitted to leave. Mr. James Anderson of this city, who was also one of the wounded, was in a building across the street yet during the whole six months they never saw each but twice. Of course watched so closely they had no means of ascertaining the feelings of the people.

As rations they weren't of a kind to make them bilious. Breakfast, a slice of bread and cup of coffee. Dinner, slice of bread, plates of rice and water. Supper, a slice of bread and a cup of coffee. Beyond a slight stiffness, he has recovered from his wound entirely and will return to post of duty when his furlough expires being very desirous to renew some acquaintances he made in Richmond.

Young Lacy, who was among the wounded prisoners, will doubtless get a discharge. His wound was quite severe; it leaves him lame from which, however, we trust he will recover. Anderson is quite recovered, he was shot through the leg.

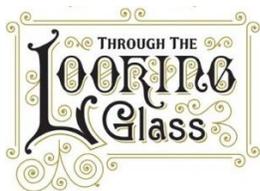
As to the “Gallant Rifles” they are decidedly fat and saucy, the boys say and from mere striplings with beardless pale faces have become sun burnt, hairy, well disciplined veterans equal to any emergency and longing for a dash at Secesh. George Bauman has come home to get volunteers to fill up the ranks. We doubt not he will be able to find all he wants.

Charlie Dow

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### **The Belgian Muskets** (Collected by Frank Moore in the 1880's)

An Illinois Colonel (having been the recipient of the same Belgian Muskets that the 2nd Wisconsin first received) felt it his duty to praise these double acting arms. Said he, “In platoon firing with the Belgian Musket, I can tell what I can not with any other arm, and that is, how many pieces have been fired.” “How can you tell that?” “O, I count the men on the ground. It never deceives me, it is ‘fire and fall back,’ flat.” “One of these Belgian Muskets will kick like a mule, and burst with the greatest facility. Several soldiers in our Illinois Regiments have been killed in this way. The bayonet, too, is a novelty – a soft-iron affair, apparently designed to coil around the enemy, as it is introduced, thus taking him prisoner.”



***Through the Looking Glass*** features are intended to tell the stories of common folks of the Civil War, whether they are civilians or military personnel. If you have access to the story of an ordinary Wisconsin citizen of this war-torn era, and are willing to share it with our Round Table, please consider submitting it to Donna Agnelly, editor of our **General Orders**. Thank you!

**LOOK FOR A RETURN OF THIS FEATURE IN THE MARCH 2017 GENERAL ORDERS.**

## FROM THE COLLECTION OF PETER JACOBSON

Parole Camp  
November 28, 1864

Mrs. Boor –

I am a paroled prisoner and when I left the Rebel prison your husband John Boor wished that if I arrived in the U.S. that I would write to you “a privilege that he is not possessed of” and state that he was a prisoner of war. He was well when I left him if there is anything more that I can inform you of please write and let me know and I would be pleased to do so. please direct to

Respc. Yours  
D. J. Folger  
Camp Parole  
Annapolis MD

### Camp Parole

Camp Parole was one of three camps established during the Civil War to accept paroled Union prisoners of war until they were exchanged for Confederate prisoners similarly confined in the south over the course of the war. Thousands of soldiers were held at the camp until they were returned to their regiments or sent home. Many who did not survive are buried in Annapolis National Cemetery.

A “camp of instruction” for 50,000 men was established near Annapolis by War Department General Order No 59. It was changed by General Order No 72 to a camp for paroled prisoners from New England and the “Middle States”. By the end of July 1862 the camp was referred to in official correspondence as “Camp Parole.”

At first, the camp was established on the St. John’s College Campus. On May 1, 1863, the Federal government signed a lease with Charles S. Welch and his wife, Ann Rebecca, for the use of their 250-acre farm outside of Annapolis. The new site was near the Annapolis-Elkridge railroad.

In August 1864, Lt. General U.S. Grant ended all exchanges of prisoners. By June 21, 1865, Captain John Power, in charge of the camp, wrote that he expected “the business of the camp would be closed in 2 or 3 weeks.”

Camp Parole was vacated by July 18, 1865.

A marker to the camp was dedicated on September 27, 2003 and is located in the old Parole Plaza Shopping Center on southbound Rte. 2 between West St. and Forest Drive. The marker was established by the Maryland Historic Trust.



As Valentine's Day approaches, one may be left to wonder about the thoughts which crossed the hearts and minds of our 19<sup>th</sup> Century forbearers on the holiday. This quick look at part of the letter written by Sullivan Ballou gives us a glimpse of the love and loss shared by so many.

*But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near to you; in the garish day and in the darkest night – amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours – always, always; and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it may be my breath; or the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.*

*Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.*

Wishing all of you a happy Valentine's Day, comfort in any losses or struggles, and a firm hand and steady heart as we move ahead into the joys and challenges of 2017.

**MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
2016-2017 SPEAKER SCHEDULE**

**September 8, 2016**

David Eicher  
*Tales of the Civil War High Commands*

**October 13, 2016**

Lance Herdegen - Nevins-Freeman Award Winner  
*"And the baby had red hair." Music of the Iron Brigade*

**November 10, 2016**

Dave Connon  
*Iowa Copperheads*

**December 8, 2016**

Bjorn Skaptason  
*Ambrose Bierce at Shiloh*

**January 12, 2017**

Richard Sommers  
*Lessons in Leadership in the Petersburg Campaign*

**February 9, 2017**

Bob O'Neill  
*Stuart's Christmas Raid of 1862*

**March 9, 2017**

Paul Kahan  
*Simon Cameron, Lincoln's First Secretary of War*

**April 20, 2017**

Diane Smith  
*Command Conflict in the Overland Campaign*

**May 11, 2017**

Reverend Robert Miller  
*Faith of the Fathers*

**June 8, 2017**

Donald Sender  
*Untold Facts of the Custer Debacle*

**Speakers remain subject to change.**

**Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.  
2016 – 2017 Board of Directors**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office/Position</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Donna Agnelly	Editor, General Orders	2019
Thomas Arliskas	First Vice President	2019
Terry Arliskas	Secretary	
Michael K. Benton	Second Vice President	2017
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**~ CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE NEWS EMAIL  
NOTIFICATIONS ~**

Would you like to receive an email reminder before each meeting? How about an email telling you about a special or upcoming Civil War event in our area? If you are interested in receiving an email reminder/notification please send your email address to Grant Johnson at: [grant.johnson@responsory.com](mailto:grant.johnson@responsory.com)

Grant will be creating a database with email reminders set to go out a week before the scheduled event. This is a purely optional choice on each member's part. If you have any questions please talk to Grant at a Round Table meeting or email him at the listed email address.

**Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for February 9, 2017**

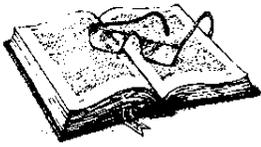
Mail your reservations by Monday, February 6, 2017, to:

**Paul Eilbes**  
1809 Washington Ave  
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

ALSO, call in reservations to: Paul Eilbes (262) 376-0568  
[peilbes@gmail.com](mailto:peilbes@gmail.com)

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_ (meal price \$30.00 per person) for \_\_\_\_ reservations for the February 9, 2017, meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. (Make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)

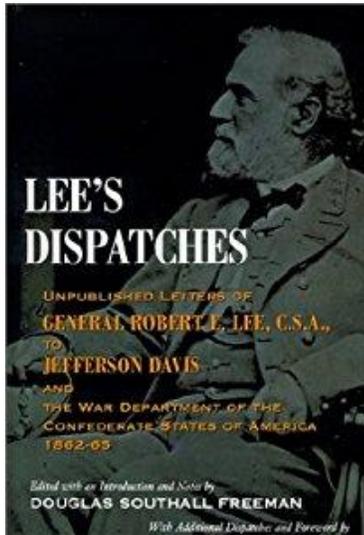
Name of Member \_\_\_\_\_



# BETWEEN THE COVERS

## LEE'S DISPATCHES TO JEFFERSON DAVIS, 1862-65

edited by Douglas Southall Freeman



This book is the third in the series I am reviewing and reading on Robert E. Lee. In this collection of dispatches, Mr. Freeman provides commentary on a variety of dispatches Lee sent to Davis. The commentary helps to put into focus why a particular dispatch was sent and what was happening at that point in time to Lee's army. The purpose of the commentary was to show Lee's thought process and how, over the course of the war, his relationship with Davis evolved.

Mr. Freeman points out that in Dispatch 29, for instance, Lee was switching from a purely defensive strategy to one that was offensive. Lee discussed this with Davis and was in line with the Southern developing offensive-defensive strategy. His plans with Jackson changed from a defensive stance of protecting the Virginia Central Railroad to setting the stage to attack Pope's army before it could be reinforced by elements from McClellan's Army of the James which was moving from the Peninsula to Central Virginia. Both Lee and Davis realized the only way to victory was to try to take on Union armies in small pieces when the opportunity was provided to them.

Dispatches included from the Gettysburg Campaign highlight Lee's thoughts on the failure to achieve a decisive victory over Union forces as Lee's fault alone. He does not highlight any failure of subordinate commander although there were numerous ones. This appears to be Lee's method of dealing with subordinates and throughout the war he continues to refuse to call out subordinate failures. In many instances however, Lee does find a way to remove or transfer subordinates he has issues with to other commands and out of the Army of Northern Virginia.

In his analysis of dispatches throughout the Overland Campaign, in Dispatch #80 for example, Lee knows Grant's objective is Richmond, but he was in doubt many times as to whether Grant would move right or left. Lee also was in the dark as to Grant's real objective and that was the destruction of Lee's army. The objective of Richmond was only the means to hold Lee in a position where Grant could destroy Lee's army. The upshot of this confusion is that Lee had to surrender the initiative to Grant. Lee's overall tactical plan was to retain the initiative. Once he turned over the initiative to Grant the Confederacy would be doomed.

Freeman also, through highlight explanations of a variety of dispatches, shows that Lee never envisioned a quick easy victory for the Confederacy but it would be a hard, drawn out affair and a closely fought war.

I found this book to be a good one to have in my Civil War library. What I did enjoy was the commentary provided by Mr. Freeman that helped put each dispatch in a historical timeframe. Generally, military dispatches are not interesting documents in and of themselves. If you were working on an explanation and analysis of a campaign, dispatches can provide a base as to what a commander was thinking and depending on whom he was providing information to, they could be helpful in showing why an army made certain dispositions and movements. In the case of this book, Mr. Freeman had already done all the legwork in analysis. I think, if this book did not have the commentary, a reader unfamiliar with the Civil War might be lost in finding much of interest in a collection of dispatches. All in all, I would recommend this book to a serious student of the war.

submitted by Bruce Klem



This past summer I, once again, attended the Civil War Institute's annual summer conference. It is held at and sponsored by the Gettysburg College at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This year's conference was held on June 17-22 and consisted of presentations, small group discussions, panel debates and battlefield tours.

The conference brings together noted historians and those interested in deeper exploration of Civil War topics. The focus of this year's conference was in keeping with the sesquicentennial of the Civil War by examining that time after the war known as Reconstruction. I had done very little reading or study of this period and I thought it would be very enlightening and provide new insights into the Civil War and its effect on the nation.

The conference this year was focused on what happened after the shooting stopped and highlighted the variety of challenges the nation faced in bringing the Southern states back into the Union and how to integrate total emancipation of the slaves into society as full citizens. The discussions offered a variety of examples that brought into focus how ill prepared the government was to do this task.

Some of this year's experts included Peter Carmichael, Susanna Lee, Abigail Cooper, Andrew Lang, Brian Craig Miller, Jason Phillips, David Silkenat, Lesley Gordon, Keith Bohannon, Brooks Simpson, Carole Emberton, Christian Keller, Jennifer Murray, Scott Hartwig, Mark Summers, and others.

The schedule of topics for the conference was:

- The Confederacy and Reconstruction
- The Questions of Reconstruction
- Envisioning Emancipation
- Citizenship in the Post Civil War South
- Reconstruction in the North
- Military Occupation of the South
- Anatomy of the Lost Cause, Jubal Early & John B. Gordon
- Grant and the Continuing Civil War
- Return of the Union Veteran
- Reconstructing Southern Womanhood
- John Bachelder's Vision of Gettysburg

Another continuing feature of the conference was the various breakout sessions. These sessions were set up for the participants to pick a couple they were interested in attending. These smaller sessions enabled a give and take between the speaker and participants and were focused on unique topics for individual interest.

The conference also featured battlefield tours to different sites in and around Gettysburg. The tour guides were experts of the sites, so a lot of additional information was provided by the tour guide and the Q & A that occurred on the site. It really helps to see the battlefield rather than just read about a particular site and then be able to ask meaningful questions of an expert to clear up any confusion gained through reading about it. The tours for the first day were:

- History as a Practical Tour: The Gettysburg Battlefield and Professional Military Education
- Training & Education: The Gettysburg Battlefield and its Uses for the Military Professional
- James Longstreet & the Lost Cause
- O.O. Howard & Gettysburg: The War and Reconstruction Unending

The tours were held in the morning. I chose the first one. Our group explored the first day action with the first positions on Seminary Ridge and Oak Hill moving on to Barlow's Knoll and the position of the 11th Corps Units north of Gettysburg. Our guide explained how the use of terrain studies and battlefields can be integrated into instruction for modern era soldiers, in particular at the U.S. Army War College where our guide, Christian Keller, is an instructor. The morning tour was organized like a staff ride.

On the afternoon of June 20th, we attended break-out sessions exploring the impact of Reconstruction on some noted people of the time. One session was on Tunis Campbell, a slave who managed to rise to a position of political power in southeast Georgia. He held it through most of Reconstruction, but eventually lost the position to Jim Crow laws and segregation. I also attended a session on Wade Hampton, the cavalry leader whose family had much wealth and power in South Carolina until after the war. Hampton managed to again rise to power to become governor and later a U.S. Senator.

Tuesday morning tours focused on the battlefield geared around some specific unit members from the 20th Maine, 3rd Virginia, 40th New York, or the 4th Texas. There was also a full day tour/staff ride on Gettysburg. I opted to go on the 3rd Virginia tour which was to trace Pickett's Charge as the 3rd Virginia was part of Kemper's Brigade. I thought we would go to the Virginia monument and take the traditional route to Cemetery Ridge that is marked by the Park Service with a mowed path from near the monument that runs straight across to the other side. I was wrong. We began our discussion at the monument and then moved up to where a battery of artillery was placed just forward of the trees. However, from there we went a different way. We backtracked to Confederate Avenue and then proceeded down the road until we came upon a bridle path. We followed the path for about a mile toward the Scherfy farm which Kemper's Brigade used as its' assembly area for the assault. The 3rd Virginia took some casualties in that area from Union artillery fire during the preliminary bombardment. From that point we moved out towards the Emmitsburg Pike roughly following the route of the 3rd Virginia. Once at the Pike we did an oblique and moved toward the Cordori Farm. Again, this was basically the same route that the 3rd followed during Pickett's Charge.

As we walked along you could see how, once the Brigade moved out to the assault, it would have been in plain view for Union artillery to pound it as it moved along. I will point out that, once we left the assembly area, we were going cross country and had to climb over a couple of fences. Retracing this route by individuals would not be permitted but since we had a licensed guide and former Park Ranger it was allowed. The 3rd took some heavy losses once it reached Cordori and then made its' final adjustments – adjusting lines to focus on its' target the Copse of Trees, which we did but with no losses. There was a large rock formation and a low spot where troops could have taken cover in after getting brutalized by Union infantry fire just to get to the stone wall. I'm not sure you can see this formation looking out from the Union lines but many of the Brigade got no further from it, all the while taking flanking fire from the Union infantry (Stannard's Brigade), that moved out from their position on Cemetery Ridge to pour a flanking fire into Kemper's entire brigade once they made their final push towards the Copse of Trees. This walk really put Pickett's Charge into perspective for me and gave me a better appreciation of the grim determination those troops had during that charge.

After lunch the rest of the afternoon was taken up with a panel discussion on The Rise of the New South, Veterans and Gettysburg in Civil War Memory. The last panel in the evening discussed Reconstruction and the Legacy of the Civil War.

Costs, I felt, were in keeping with this type of event. Tuition, room and board were \$895, which was a slight increase of \$30 from the 2014 conference. While I chose to stay in one of the dorm rooms, there are a variety of options available. You can arrange your own room at one of the many hotels in the Gettysburg area or the Gettysburg Hotel has a block of rooms held for the event. The same holds true for meals. I opted for the meal plan and found the food provided at the College cafeteria to be quite good. Again, you can provide your own food or eat at one of the various nearby restaurants. Of course, there may be some additional costs depending on how many books you want to buy. As usual, I came home with another arm load of new books.

The 2017 conference will focus on a wide variety of topics on the Civil War now that the Sesquicentennial is over. I recommend the conference to those with a high degree of interest in the subject and believe that you will get a lot out of the information provided. I drove to Gettysburg from Kenosha and found the drive to be reasonable. I did the drive in 1½ days but chose to stop in Pittsburgh after about 10 hours. If pushed, you could make it in one day of straight driving in about 14 hours. There are flight options and a shuttle is available.

For additional information, check out the Civil War Institute's website.

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All address changes or problems receiving your *General Orders* should be directed through Membership Chairman Paul Eilbes.

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## A DIME WELL SPENT . . .

For two years I have taken him to every Oak Ridge book sale. Recently he spotted a sign announcing another and demanded we attend. "I'll pay for my own books," he informed me. Like a warrior on a mission he zeroed in on the children's table. After amassing a sufficient stack of titles, he presented them for check out. I stood well behind him.

A kind lady with a warm smile tallied up the damage. She held up one book suitable for a teenager and commented to my son, "This is for older kids. Can you read it?" Something gently tugged at the back of my mind. Demetri offered a shrug in response. She continued sorting until she came to a not-so-gently read Amelia Bedelia book.

"How about a dime for this one?" she asked.

"*A dime.*"

A flood of memories washed over me. Demetri began fishing in his pocket for money as my mind wandered some three decades into the past...

One summer day my grandfather brought me a pummeled rummage sale copy of the first volume of *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, by Douglas Southall Freeman. My grandpa charged me a dime and a kiss on his shiny bald head.

It was my first Civil War book. I was eleven or twelve. Who knew?

I read it aloud walking along the lilac-studded northern boundary of our Iowa property line. After a steady barrage of questions, my mother tired of the game and dropped a dictionary on a basswood stump. I got the message. Do your own research...

I spent the next week living with a cadre of men I would never meet, challenging myself as I flipped through Webster's all while imagining another time and place. To this day I still smell pungently sweet lilac whenever someone mentions the Battle of Malvern Hill.

I remember how excited I was when I discovered there were three volumes in the series, and how the librarian with a freshly-sharpened yellow pencil stuck deep into her beehive hairdo tried to discourage me from checking them out because I was "far too young to read and understand Freeman."

I opened a book and read aloud. That convinced her.

With the second volume under my arm, I peddled my green Stingray bike (with the long cool banana seat) across town to the Union soldier's memorial obelisk in Central Park, where I leaned against the sun-warmed polished granite and devoured the stirring introduction and first chapter.

I finished the book in the back of a Dodge station wagon on the way to New York City with the family, and the third installment on the stoop of an apartment complex in Brooklyn ten days later.

The colossal scope and breadth of books in general, and the Civil War in particular, finally began to dawn on me. My grandfather's dime stirred a lifetime of passion...

I stopped my son as he pulled a few coins from his pocket to pay for his books. "I've got it," I told him with a smile he returned in kind. Before we arrived home, he had the torn paperback out of the sack and was reading for all he was worth.

"Wanna play some catch?" I asked, hoping I knew the answer.

"No, I want to read," he replied without looking up.

Without another word, Demetri walked upstairs and flopped down on his bed. I walked into my library, pulled out that tattered first volume of *Lee's Lieutenants*, trotted up the steps, and asked him to scoot over.

He smiled and wiggled closer to the wall. I dropped down next to him. And we read together. And then we fell asleep together...reading.

A dime well spent can still buy you everything that really matters.

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