



GENERAL ORDERS



The Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. Since 1947 and The Iron Brigade Association

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The April 20th, 2006, meeting is to be held at **Wisconsin Club**, Milwaukee

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Horace Mewborn on Mosby and his Rangers

It has been claimed by some that the activities of partisan ranger bands in northern and western Virginia, especially those of John S. Mosby, may have prevented a Union victory in the summer or fall of 1864. A Virginian with a penchant for violence, Mosby had been practicing law at the outbreak of the war.

Originally an enlisted man and officer in the 1st Virginia Cavalry, he rose steadily in the ranks until he was rewarded with the authority to raise a band of partisans for service in the Loudon Valley of northern Virginia. With his command he wreaked havoc along the Union supply lines, forcing field commanders to detach troops to guard their communications. His forays took him within sight of Washington, with Mosby himself often doing the advance scouting in disguise.

With the surrender of Lee, Mosby simply disbanded his command on April 20, 1865, rather than formally surrender. While the partisans were certainly a nuisance to Federal commanders, it is an open question as to how effective they were in prolonging the conflict. Many Southerners were very critical of partisans.

Not pardoned until 1866, Mosby practiced law and befriended Grant. For supporting Grant, a Republican, in the 1868 and 1872 elections, he earned the enmity of many Southerners. He received appointments as U.S. consul in Hong Kong and other government posts.

— Based on <http://www.civilwarhome.com/mosbybio.htm> accessed 12 Mar 06

Horace Mewborn is a native of North Carolina. After graduating from Campbell College he served seven years in the U. S. Army, five in Special Forces assignments, and spent 30 months Vietnam. After leaving the Army, he graduated from East Carolina University and then joined the FBI. Among his assignments with the FBI were tours of duty in New York City, Washington, D.C., the Hostage Rescue Team, and FBI Headquarters.

Mewborn has authored five articles for *Blue and Gray Magazine*. One of those articles concerned JEB Stuart's ride around the Army of the Potomac in June 1862, and another was about Wade Hampton's cattle raid in September 1864. The other three articles were about the operations of John Mosby and his Rangers.

Mewborn is the co-author of the *43rd Battalion, Virginia Cavalry*, for the H. E. Howard Virginia Regimental Series, and he compiled and edited *From Mosby's Command*. He currently resides in New Bern, N.C.

Schedule of Events

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| • Staff Meeting (when required;
open to all members) | 5:30 PM |
| • Registration and Social Hour | 6:15 PM |
| • Dinner | 6:45 PM |
| • Program Begins | 7:30 PM |

Slate of Officers for the 2006-7 Season

In accordance with the Bylaws, the slate of officers nominated for election are Ellen Kelling Vukovic, Jim Johnson, Jud Wyant, Elaine Ottman and Dave Coverdale. Dale Brasser and Lance Herdegen are leaving the board at the end of the season.

The slate will be voted on at the April meeting and the elected officers will begin their duties in May. Officers normally serve for terms of three years. Contact a member of the Board to volunteer to serve your Round Table.

Crisis in Confederate Command

For a good read, select Jeffery S. Prushankin's *A Crisis in Confederate Command—Edmund Kirby Smith, Richard Taylor and the Army of the Trans-Mississippi*.

So many authors have complained that the Trans-Mississippi actions during the Civil War have been largely ignored, that more attention has been focused on the war west of the Mississippi than ever before. Prushankin has chosen to focus on the relationship of the two most prominent rebel generals in that area: Edmund Kirby Smith and Richard Taylor. Prushankin does not ignore the battles, the strategy, nor the tactics, but zeroes in on the ongoing dislike and distrust between Smith and Taylor. Both Smith and Taylor come alive as persons with human emotions and frailties. The reader is left to choose, if one must choose, which was the more admirable.

Smith is described as much more adept at administration, politics, and dealing with state and local

officials. He certainly recognized that the governments of Arkansas and *ex-parte* Missouri had lobbied for his appointment as commander of the area. His continuous attempts to keep union troops out of Arkansas and to recapture Missouri often served to bolster his popularity there, but his strategic and tactical prowess seldom showed any success. His arguments with General Ma-gruder over removing troops from Texas is well covered in this book.

Taylor, son of President Zachary Taylor, was a Louisianan as well as a better strategist and tactician. The major battles won by the Rebels in the Trans-Mississippi were won by him: Mansfield and Pleasant Hill. He did this in spite of Smith's depletion of his ranks by transferring cavalry and infantry to Arkansas. Taylor, continually battling ill health and lack of troops, stopped Banks' Red River Campaign, even though greatly outnumbered. Taylor kept proposing the retaking of New Orleans, and perhaps could have done so if Smith had supported him. Of course, holding the city would have been another matter.

— Dave Coverdale



Officers of the Board of Directors, Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., as of January 2006

Name	Office/Title	Contact	Term Expires
Gene Jamrozy	President	(414) 327-2811	2008
Ellen Kelling Vukovic	1st Vice President	(262) 334-6265	2006
Michael Benton	2nd Vice President	(414) 962-3767	2008
Paul Eilbes	Treasurer/Membership Committee Chair	(262) 376-0568; paul.eilbes@ipaper.com	2007
William Finke	Secretary	(414) 221-2764 bill.finke@we-energies.com	2008
John D. Beatty	Editor/Publisher, <i>General Orders</i>	jdbeatty@amcivwar.com	2007
Jim Johnson	Webmaster	secondwi@earthlink.net	2006

War Horses of the Civil War — Part I

On September 17th, 1862, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under Robert E. Lee, was fought to a bloody standstill by the Federal Army of the Potomac, at Antietam. In the aftermath, Lee withdrew back into Virginia, his hopes of rallying Maryland to the South's cause frustrated. Yet he escaped pursuit. The Federal commander, George B. McClellan, allowed his enemy to slip away.

President Lincoln chided and cajoled his reluctant general to action, but 'Little Mac' would not be hurried. Indeed, a month after the battle, he claimed he still could not move. His army's horses were too exhausted. Notwithstanding McClellan's reputation for over-caution, this was not an empty excuse. Although largely unheralded in conventional accounts of any war, the conduct of battle was shaped at every level, tactical, operational and strategic, by the capabilities of the war-horse.

That the significance of the horse to victory (and defeat) has not been fully recognized should come as no surprise. Even at the time, the absolute centrality of the horse to warfare was not always appreciated by those outside the military profession. In response to McClellan's dispatch, outlining the state of his 'broken down' horses, Lincoln sarcastically responded, "Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigue anything?" This was characteristic of Lincoln's sharp wit, but also of his ignorance of military matters.

Cavalry was not simply a battlefield arm. While scouting, it was the eyes of the army; in the protective role it was the screen behind which his forces concen-

trated, maneuvered and camped securely. It never rested.

After Antietam, six Federal cavalry regiments made an extended reconnaissance of over 200 miles. One unit covered seventy-eight miles in just twenty-four hours, pursuing a Confederate raid into Pennsylvania. At the same time, the cavalry's pickets were responsible for over 150 miles of front along the Potomac. Scattered patrols skirmished with their Southern counterparts. As McClellan said: "If any instance can be found where overworked Cavalry has performed more labor than mine ... I am not conscious of it."

Just as the majority of the Union's soldiery was drawn from civilian volunteers more enthusiastic than skilful, so the horses came from the comparatively gentle pace of farm work. Many should never have been taken from their stables. The ignorance of unqualified inspectors led to the purchase of great numbers of sickly and worn-out horses for the army. Young horses under three, and old ones well into their twenties, were stamped US and passed for service. Jaws swollen with distemper and spavined limbs were considered no obstacle to military utility. The problem was evident from the earliest days of the conflict, but the insatiable demand for remounts stymied efforts to find a solution.

To Be Continued...

— Gervase Phillips, principal lecturer in history at Manchester Metropolitan University

— Excerpted from *History Today Magazine*, December 2005 Volume 55, Number 12.

2006 Schedule

- May 11: Mark Noll— "*How the Bible Helped Start the Civil War*"

Meetings are at the Wisconsin Club unless otherwise noted. *Speakers and topics are subject to change without notice.*

Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for: April 20th, 2006

Mail your reservations by April 14th to:

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

ALSO, call in reservations to (262) 376-0568

Enclosed is \$_____ (meal price \$20.00 per person) for _____ reservations for the next meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. (Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)

Name of Member: _____

In the Event of Inclement Weather...

Since we live in a part of the Union that has such wonderful weather, the President will decide if there is to be any change in a meeting due to weather. Listen to WTMJ or WISN radio for news of meeting cancellations if the weather turns on us.

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. admits members of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges and activities of the Round Table.

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A Gentle Reminder

The Wisconsin Club and the Board of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee would like to remind our members that jackets are required for the Club's dining room. Please contact club management if you have any questions.

General Orders Submissions and Editorial Policy

All submissions to the *GO* are used on a space-available, date-required basis. Electronic submissions are preferred over paper. The Editor/Publisher reserves the right to edit all submissions for length, propriety, content, and house style. Submissions with a direct Civil War interest, or those that are date-sensitive, will be published first.

All submissions must be received by the Editor/Publisher at jdbeatty@amcivwar.com no later than the 10th of the month before the next *GO* (for example, submissions for the January *GO* must be received by 10 December). All address changes, or problems receiving the *GO*, are handled through the Membership Chairman.