

# GENERAL ORDERS

The Newsletter of the

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



June 11, 2026

Alex Rossino

## **Calamity at Frederick: A Fresh Look at the Creation & Loss of Special Order #191**

The loss of Robert E. Lee's Special Orders No. 191 is one of the Civil War's enduring mysteries. In this meticulous study, Dr. Alex Rossino presents a bold new interpretation of the evidence surrounding the orders' creation, distribution, and loss outside Frederick, Maryland, in September 1862. Rossino makes extensive use of primary sources to explore these subjects and other important questions related to the orders, including why General Lee thought his army could operate north of the Potomac until winter; why Lee found it necessary to seize the Federal garrison at Harpers Ferry; what Lee hoped to accomplish after capturing Harpers Ferry; where Corporal Barton Mitchell of the 27th Indiana found the Lost Orders; and if D. H. Hill or someone else was to blame for losing the orders. The result is a well-documented reassessment that sheds new light while challenging long-held assumptions.

A resident of historic Charles Town, West Virginia, Dr. Alex Rossino is an independent historian and author. He earned Master's and Doctoral degrees in History at Syracuse University before working for nine years as a historian at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Dr. Rossino turned his attention to the American Civil War in 2011 and after several years of research, he produced *Six Days in September: A Novel of Lee's Army in Maryland, September 1862*. The book proved to be popular among historians and enthusiasts alike, leading to a sequel titled *The Guns of September: A Novel of McClellan's Army in Maryland, September 1862*, which came out in September 2024. Dr. Rossino also returned to writing history, producing *Their Maryland: The Army of Northern Virginia from the Potomac Crossing to Sharpsburg in September 1862* (November 2021) and co-authoring



with Gene Thorp *The Tale Untwisted: General George B. McClellan, The Maryland Campaign, and the Discovery of Lee's Lost Orders*, which came out in January 2023. His most recent history, *Calamity at Frederick: Robert E. Lee, Special Orders No. 191, and Confederate Misfortune on the Road to Antietam* (October 2023), completed his in-depth study of the Lost Orders saga from the Confederate perspective, along with an ebook on the document's handwriting to identify the author, titled, *Who Wrote the Lost Copy of Robert E. Lee's Special Orders No. 191: A Handwriting Analysis Companion to Calamity at Frederick* in October 2025.

## **General Orders No. 6-26**

June 2026

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## **June Meeting at a Glance The Wisconsin Club 9<sup>th</sup> and Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

**Jackets are required for dining room.**

- 5:30 p.m. - Registration/Social Hour
- 6:30 p.m. - Dinner
- 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.**

**2025-2026 Speaker Schedule p. 7**

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

## MCWRT Mission Statement

The purposes of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee shall be to promote study of personalities and events leading to or associated with the American Civil War; to provide a forum for members and guests to exchange views; and to support study and remembrance of our own nation's history.

## 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!

## Non-Discrimination Statement

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, creed, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, gender identity or expression, veteran status, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other legally protected status in its educational programs, activities, or membership.

## A Change in Command

With the passing of Lance Herdegen, it has become necessary to appoint a new Brigadier General Commanding of the Iron Brigade Association.

Ellen Kelling Vokovic has agreed to accept that position, and is uniquely qualified to do so. She is a direct descendant of Edwin A. Brown, Company E of the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteers. Ellen has served the Milwaukee Round Table as President and Treasurer and a long-time MCWRT member.

The Brigadier General is the chief administrative officer of the Iron Brigade Association and presides at Association meetings when able to attend.

NUMBER	NAME	AGE	RESIDENCE	PLACE OF BIRTH	OTHER RELIGIOUS SERVICE	REMARKS
	<b>Tom Mueller</b>					
1	George Andrew	28	Franklin	Wisconsin		Has filed statement of intention
2	George Charles	22	Franklin	Wisconsin		Has not filed statement of intention
3	John Chapman	23				Has filed statement of intention
4	John Adams	24				
5	John Augustus	25				
6	John George	26				

## 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 July 1, 2025 through March 13, 2026.

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

Susan Anderson, Paul Eilbes, Gerald Frangesch, Doug Haag, Van & Dawn Harl, Rebecca & Charles Jarvis, Grant Johnson

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

Mike Deeken, George Geanon, Gene & Jane Jamrozy, Dan Nettesheim, Andrew Platta, Laura Rinaldi, Brad & Kathy Schotanus, Dave & Kay Wege

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

Don & Amy Bauer, Mike Benton, Crain Bliwas, Ellen & Jerry DeMers, Gary & Judy Ertel, Bill & Claudette Finke, Jim Heinz, Peter & Jean Jacobsohn, Bruce Klem, Steve Leopold, Kathy McNally, Jim & Monica Millane, Dennis Slater, Dan Tanty, Justin Tolomeo

### Contributor (up to \$99)

George Affeldt, Gordon Dammann, Thomas Doyle, Lori Duginski, John Durr, Julian Gonzalez, Leon & Margaret Harris, Christopher Johnson, Rich Kallan, Jerome Kowalski, Jay Lauck, Fred Madsen, Rod Malinowski, Seth Maxfield, Paul & Susan Miller, Thomas Olsen, John Rodahl, Rick Schultz, Diana Smurawa, Anne & Dave Steinhilb, Dan VanGrunsvan, Paul Zehren

### Speaker Enhancement Fund

George Affeldt, Don and Amy Bauer, Jerry & Ellen DeMers, Thomas Doyle, Lori Duginski, John Durr, Paul Eilbes, Gary & Judy Ertel, Gerald Frangesch, George Geanon, Julian Gonzalez, Jim Heinz, John Helmenstine, Tom Hesse, Don & Laverna Hilbig, Peter & Jean Jacobsohn, Gene & Jane Jamrozy, Dan Jones, Rich Kallan, Allan Kasprzak, John Lencheck, Steve Leopold, Rod Malinowski, Robin & Tom Martin, Kathy McNally, Jim & Monica Millane, Paul & Susan Miller, Thomas Olsen, John & Susan Petty, Laura Rinaldi, Diana Smurawa, Dan Tanty, Paul Zehren



Previous June meetings of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table featured these speakers and topics.

- 2010 Robert Girardi: "Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign"
- 2011 Peter S. Carmichael: "Robert E' Lee and the Strategy of Annihilation"
- 2012 Dennis E. Frye: "September Suspense: Lincoln's Union in Peril"
- 2013 Timothy B. Smith: "Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation"
- 2014 Kenneth W. Noe: "The War in Appalachia"
- 2015 Garry Adelman: "4D Civil War Photography Extravaganza"
- 2016 Dale Phillips: "Ben Butler and the Federal Occupation of New Orleans"
- 2017 David Wege: "When Johnny Came Marching Home"
- 2018 Dennis Rasbach: "Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain at Petersburg"
- 2019 Greg Biggs: "The Question was One of Supplies"
- 2020 Bruce Klem: "The 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry"
- 2021 A. Wilson Greene: "We Have Done All that is Possible and Must Be Resigned: The First Petersburg Offensive"
- 2023 Mark Zimmermann: "The Brutal Retreat from Nashville – 1864"
- 2024 Timothy B. Smith: "The Real Horse Soldiers"
- 2025 David Powell: "Lost Opportunities in the Atlanta Campaign"



The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee was established in 1947 and is the second oldest of the more than 200 Civil War Round Tables still in existence in the United States and abroad. Current membership of the MCWRT is approximately 200.

## Kenosha Civil War Museum

### Second Friday Lecture Series

Sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table and the Iron Brigade Association. Free and open to the public.

#### The Organ of the Soldiers: An Introduction to Civil War Camp Newspapers

Friday, June 12 | 12pm – 1pm

Presented by Patrick Brennan

The third and final entry of this groundbreaking trilogy examines the battlefield's transformation from post-battle Hell to American shrine. Patrick Brennan used an artificial intelligence-based computerized color identifier, which results in a monumental full-color study of the important three-day battle like it has never been seen before. This sweeping installment closes his three volume series, which every student of history in general, and the Civil War in particular, will want to own for a lifetime.

#### Port Hudson: The Most Significant Battlefield Photographs of the Civil War 2.0

Friday, July 10 | 12pm – 1pm

Presented by Dr. Lawrence Hewitt

Between June 14 and July 9, 1863—the final 25 days of the 48-day siege of Port Hudson—the photographic firm of McPherson & Oliver moved about the battlefield memorializing soldiers in action—and in combat! In the process of making this visual record of opposing armies actively engaged, the photographers created one of the greatest visual records of the Civil War. Their images included one taken at midnight (the first ever taken in the dark), one converted into a composite print (created by combining portions of two negatives), the Confederate army at the surrender ceremony, and examples of time-lapse photography. Sadly, the duo seldom receives credit for these images. Other studios, including Matthew Brady's, published the McPherson & Oliver's images as their own work. As with the battlefield they immortalized, McPherson and Oliver deserve better.

Lawrence Lee Hewitt was a professor of history at Southeastern Louisiana University. He has authored Port Hudson, Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi and coedited four volumes of essays under the collective title of Confederate Generals in the Western Theater and three volumes of essays under the collective title of Confederate Generals in the Trans-Mississippi Theater.

See page 5 for more  
Kenosha Civil War Museum events.



### The Original Wisconsin Regiments Come Together on July 1

His horse was covered with dust and foam, its flanks bloody from continued spurring. He drew rein as he neared us and shouted, "Where is Corps Headquarters?" "Over there," we answered and pointed to a little knoll about forty rods distant where he could see the Headquarters flag, waving in the twilight. He struck spurs to his horse and dashed in that direction, leaped from the saddle and rushed into the tent.

In a moment more, all was hurry and confusion, the bugles sounded the assembly, and orderlies and staff officers were rushing in all directions to the headquarters of the several brigades, whose bugles again sounded the call, and officers rushed out shouting to the men "pack up, pack up and fall in". In an incredibly short space of time the men were in line, knapsacks and accoutrements on, ready for the march. Of course we were curious to know what all this meant. It was always a mystery to me, how news traveled through the ranks of an army.

In a few minutes we learned that a battle had been began at a place called Gettysburg. That General Reynolds, who commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, had been killed. That the Wisconsin regiments had been in action and been badly cut up. That Colonel Fairchild had been badly wounded, Colonel Stevenson killed, and that many of the men from our state had been killed and wounded. That our forces there had been fighting against odds, and were compelled to give ground. That we were to join the rest of the army at Gettysburg, where a great battle was to be fought, and where we would be needed. "Gettysburg. Where is Gettysburg?" "Thirty-two miles away." "Thirty-five miles away," was the answer, for the divisions were scattered over more than two miles of ground.

The night was cool, the road smooth and clear and we marched silently and swiftly along. Suddenly from away towards the head of the column was heard the strains of a band, breaking through the stillness of the night. The men caught the cadence of the music and fell into the marching step.

The band was playing the "Old John Brown" Battle Hymn, and as they reached the chorus, first a score of voices, joined the words to the music, then a hundred, then a thousand, and soon ten thousand voices rolled out the battle song,

"Glory, Glory Hallelujah,  
His soul is marching on,"

All night long we marched in this way. The bands of music alternating with the shrill fifes and rattling drums, then for a time we plodded on in silence with the mechanical route step. Then the music of the band would throw us marching step, and "tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys went marching" until the grey dawn of July 2d, found us far on the way.

So far as my memory, serves me this was the only march of that character where the 6th Corps used music on the route. Occasionally when passing through a city, the bands would play, but I have no recollection that we ever used music to march by when simply on the route. Whoever was responsible for it, it was certainly a happy inspiration and helped the men wonderfully. We pushed on all night at a wonderful pace, and my recollection is that we rested but once, or at the most twice, during the whole night, and then simply by sitting by the roadside for a few moments.

In the early morning, we filed into some fields by the road side and were ordered to make coffee, but the time allowed was so short that more than half of the men were unable to get coffee made and resumed the march without it. On and on we went, one weary mile following another and as the sun mounted upward, the heated rays came down with oppressive force.

About 11 o'clock we reached that part of the pike over which the troops in advance of us had passed with their artillery and trains, the day and night previous and the road was covered with dust three or four inches deep, which rose in great clouds and nearly stifled us. There was no music and no singing now, we were fast reaching the limit of human endurance. Men reeled and staggered along as if they were drunken. Ever and anon a rifle or musket would fall clattering on the stony pike, as the man who carried it collapsed and sank in a quivering heap in the midst of the roadway. He would be seized and dragged to the roadside, his musket laid beside him and his comrades would resume their places in the ranks and struggle on.

There was much to inspire the men in their dogged resolution' to push on, for by this time we could hear the sullen roar of the artillery engaged in battle ahead of us, and we knew that the largest corps in the Army of the Potomac was sorely needed. Then, too, we had passed out of Maryland into Pennsylvania, and we were in the land of our friends. As we marched past the farm houses we could see a starry flag hung out and the women in the porch would look at the exhausted, dust covered men, with pitying sympathetic eyes. as the column struggled on. They stripped their houses of food and drink to pass it out to the weary and hungry men.

Continued on page 5.

**Thank you, James Johnson, for these monthly *From the Field* features!**

One incident that I shall never forget. At a large farm house stood near the pike with rare thoughtfulness the people had brought out a number of tubs and pails and placed them along the side of the road. An old man and a boy were busy drawing water from the well and a portly matron and two handsome girls were keeping the tubs and pails filled with cool sweet water. Their faces were flushed and they trembled with the exertion. I said to the lady, "Madam, that work is very hard on you." She said, "God bless you, I don't feel it. I have two boys somewhere among you and I would not want them or their friends to pass their mother's house without at least a cup of cold -water." I passed on, I trust she met her boys and that they lived to be a comfort to her in her old age. I do not think she and her girls ever realized how their acts, and the acts of others like them, nerved the men of the Army of the Potomac to stand in the breach at Gettysburg.

About one o'clock, or a little after, we came to what appeared to be the 'divide' where the land began to slope toward Gettysburg. The rumble of the cannonade became plainer, and faraway where the green of the trees met the skyline, we could see the white puffs stand out in the blue sky, indicating where the shells were bursting above the trees, on the crest of the hills.

The sight acted on the men of the 6th Corps as the spur acts on the jaded horse. Every man quickened his step and we pushed on down the miles of descent yet to be covered before

we could reach the battlefield. The country was spread out before us like a vast panorama, and as we came nearer, we could see the army occupied a position almost in a semicircle with one flank resting on a small mountain, which we learned afterwards was Culp's Hill, and the other on a larger elevation which we later knew by the name of Little Round Top. We went on and on until it seemed as though the road would never end, or as if the hills receded from us as fast as we were able to approach them. At last we began to descend into what seemed to be a valley lying behind the circle of hills on which our army lay.

As we came nearer, our practiced ears could detect the continuous roll of musketry amid the pauses of the artillery, nearer yet and we could see a stream of wounded men coming down the slopes from the hills. We left the pike and struck across the fields towards Little Round Top which the rebels were trying to reach and which our comrades of the Third and Fifth corps were defending with strenuous courage and energy. We arrived on the field of Gettysburg at a critical moment. Sickles had been driven back, broken and in disorder, from the Peach Orchard. The rebels had pierced our lines and were struggling to maintain a hold upon Round Top. The leading brigade of the 6th Corps marching column never halted but went right into action from the line of march.

And the 5th Wisconsin rejoined the 2d, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin again on high ground at Gettysburg

## **More from the Kenosha Civil War Museum**

### **Living History at the Civil War Museum with The First Michigan Engineers**

**Saturday, August 18 | 10am – 4pm**

### **Civil War Immigrant Soldiers in the Union Army**

**Friday, August 14 | 12pm – 1pm**

**Presented by Scott Norrick**

Scott Norrick's presentation will cover the key reasons immigrants came to America just prior to the Civil War. He will also discuss the scope and nationalities of immigrant soldiers in the Union Army as well as explore what motivated so many immigrants to volunteer for the Civil War. He will also delve into specific Upper Midwestern regiments that had large immigrant populations, such as the 32nd, 35th and 61st Indiana and the 23rd and 24th Illinois. Scott will also give some advice on best practices for researching your Union Civil War ancestors.

Scott Norrick's passion is connecting people to their past. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois and a master's degree from Northwestern University. He combines over 30 years of family history research with the necessary skills and passion to provide meaningful and proven results in breaking down family history brick walls. He is currently working on a book that chronicles the war time experiences and the post war trauma of his four great-great grandfathers that were volunteers in the Union Army during the Civil War.

### **Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad in Illinois and on Lake Michigan**

**Friday, September 11 | 12pm – 1pm**

**Presented by Dr. Larry McClellan**

*Further details about Dr. McClellan's presentation will be shared in the September General Orders.*



*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 citizen of this war-torn era and are willing to share it with our members, please consider submitting it to the General Orders. Thank you!

## Gilbert H. Bates – 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Heavy Artillery



Two and a half years after the end of the Civil War, Gilbert Bates, a Democrat, had a heated debate with a friend who was a Radical Republican. The controversy centered on the loyalty – or lack thereof – of Southern to the Federal government and the American flag. Bates, formerly a sergeant in Company H, 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Heavy Artillery, argued that the bulk of the Southern population was now loyal to the Union. His friend disagreed. Bates retorted that he could travel through the late rebellious states waving the good old flag and not suffer for it. This was in November 1867.

Bates wagered that he could safely march the 1,400 miles from Vicksburg to Washington, D.C. carrying the unfurled colors of the United States. He planned to arrive on or before July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1868. Bates would carry neither weapons nor money, and would travel without an escort. The intrepid ex-soldier said he would depend upon the hospitality of the southern people for food and shelter.

As stakes in the wager, Bates would earn a dollar from his friend for each day of his journey. If he was unable to complete the trip he would receive nothing.

At the start of the journey, all of Bates' expenses in Vicksburg were paid by a southern gentleman. The ladies of Vicksburg sewed "a neat silk flag," five feet long by three wide, attached to a regulation staff, for Bates to carry as he traveled. These same ladies had previously sewed Confederate flags.

Bates set out from Vicksburg on January 28, 1868, with a band playing "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp." Over the next three months he would cross through Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. General Sherman's famous march was not as long.

On each day's journey, he would be met by hordes of people, miles before he neared their town. He was greeted with "blessings and thanks and kindness" by former foes, families who had lost loved ones in the war, the general public, and municipal officials. Crowds would welcome him into towns and escort him out again after rounds of speeches.

Whenever possible, the pedestrian patriot followed the line of the railroad, which was the most direct route and allowed him to meet the most people.

By the time Bates reached Richmond, Virginia, his feet were paining him greatly. In the evening a carriage conveyed him from the Exchange Hotel to the Capitol building, where he waved his flag from what had been the seat of the Confederate government. There were no objections from the crowd that gathered to witness the event.

On April 14, 1868, Sergeant Bates crossed the Long Bridge over the Potomac and into Washington, D.C. His journey had lasted seventy-eight days. At the end of the bridge, hundreds of spectators and a marching band assembled to cheer him. Bates led the parade up Pennsylvania Avenue to the Executive Mansion, where he was invited into the East Room by President Johnson. After more speeches and handshakes, Bates made his way to the Capitol building, where he intended to unfurl his flag from its dome. The Chief of the Capitol Police, under orders from the Radical Republicans, barred the way – no flag that had flown over the former capital of the Confederacy would be waved in Washington.

Undeterred, Bates selected another facility for the culmination of his Star-Spangled March. Triumphantly he unfurled his weather-worn banner over the partially-completed Washington Monument to the accolades of the crowd below.

Many poems and articles were written about "Bate's March" during and after the event, and he himself wrote a book about his experience. It was entitled *Sergt. Bates' March Carrying the Stars and Stripes Unfurled from Vicksburg to Washington*.

written by William Gladstone  
submitted by Peter Jacobsohn

## The Driftless Area Civil War Club Schedule of Meetings

Programs are held monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at 1:00 at the Odd Fellow Lodge at 112 Front Street Mineral Point.

Contact John Helmenstine at [helmenstine@att.net](mailto:helmenstine@att.net) for more information.

June 20, 2026	Jerry Allen – The 15 <sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Regiment
July 18, 2026	Mark Tully – Frontier Doctor
August 15, 2026	Bruce Allardice – Lincoln as a War Leader
September 19, 2026	Laura Schiller -Illinois Cavalry
October 17, 2026	Leslie Goddard – Clara Barton

Discussions are being held to host a Celebration of Life for Lance Herdegen on August 1 from 2:00 – 4:00 PM at the Kenosha Civil War Museum.



## Musings and Memories

### Reflections of a Wisconsin Civil War Historian

By now you have heard the sad news that the Boss Black Hat, Lance Herdegen, passed away. Before that sad event, we were working on a series of articles that would include excerpts from his vast store of original documents combined with his musings, his commentary on that material. No one could tell a story like Lance, and his commentary, delivered with a twinkle in his eye, was always a delight. A few of us had the privilege of walking hallowed ground with him at Antietam in September of 2025. The Boss Black Hat said that several of the Iron Brigade men who lost their lives in the area of the Cornfield were buried behind the knoll near the Hagerstown Pike, which is mentioned in the paragraph below. Lance spoke not only about the fierce fighting in the corn, but also of the mettle of the men who served with Battery B. Then he said, “And Captain von Bachelles’s dog was buried with them. When the bodies were moved, most of them to the National Cemetery, the dog was left behind. You know, I think we should come back some dark night, dig up that dog, and bury him with the lads.”

*Antietam -- (Sept. 1862)*

*I am not going to enter into a description of that battle in detail. There were two guns placed in a road on a knoll. The road was cut out so that the muzzle of the guns just came above the ground. The rest of the Battery was to our right in plain view. The Rebs didn't see the two guns in the road. They charged on the Battery. I was with the guns in the road. We had orders to load with double canister and wait for them. We loaded those two guns in the road with two canister and a shrapnel with the fuse cut short, so as to burst at the muzzle of the gun. And we waited for them to come until they were climbing the fence, when we fired right through the fence killing lots of them, some with slivers off the rails. I saw one man with a sliver four feet long driven right through him. It was an awful slaughter. I could walk for a mile stepping from one dead man to another without stepping on the ground. The Battery lost their full share. We lost forty-four men out of about ninety and forty horses. The Battery lost ninety men killed and wounded in ten months, including Antietam and Pittsburg and the fighting between the lines of those two places. The Battery was filled up from time to time as the case required, but never was filled to its full quota again as it was not a healthy place to be in. It was hard to get recruits after these two battles -- after our fighting quality became known.*

Benjamin Hall Stillman,  
Co, D, 7th Wisconsin, Stewarts Battery B, 4th U.S. Artillery  
“B. H. Stillman and his Civil War Record”  
Eugene, OR., Register-Guard

**MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
2025-2026 SPEAKER SCHEDULE**

- September 11, 2025**                      **Dr. James Pula**  
*Overlooked and Underappreciated: Dan Butterfield*
- October 9, 2025**                         **Kim Harris**  
*Libbie Bacon Custer*
- November 13, 2025**                    **Chris Kolakowski**  
*Civil War to World War:  
Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. and Sr.*
- December 11, 2025**                    **Brian Jordan**  
(At the Bavarian Bierhaus)  
*Marching Home: Union Veterans - Their Unending Civil War*
- January 8, 2026**                         **Guy Fraker**  
*Lincoln the Lawyer*
- February 12, 2026**                     **Keith Bohannon**  
*General Joseph Wheeler and the Army of Tennessee's  
Cavalry Corps in the Atlanta Campaign*
- March 12, 2026**                         **Cliff Roberts**  
*Castle Pinckney*
- April 9, 2026**                            **Wayne Motts**  
*Nevins-Freeman Award Winner  
Wisconsin Civil War Artifacts in the Collection of the  
National Civil War Museum*
- May 7, 2026**                             **Chris Mackowski**  
*A Tempest of Iron and Lead:  
The Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse*
- June 11, 2026**                            **Alex Rossino**  
*Calamity at Frederick: A Fresh Look at the Creation and  
Loss of Special Orders No. 191*

**Speakers/topics remain subject to change.**



**Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.  
2025 – 2026 Board of Directors**

Name	Office/Position	Term Expires
Terry Arliskas	Secretary/Program Chair	2028
Thomas Arliskas	Past President	2028
Michael K. Benton	President	2026
Dale Bspalec	Member	2026
Roman Blenski	Second Vice President Quartermaster	2028
Mike Deeken	Member	2028
Paul A. Eilbes	Treasurer	2028
Tom Hesse	Past President	2026
Grant Johnson	Membership/Webmaster Past President	2027
Bruce Klem	Past President	2027
Daniel Nettesheim	Member	2027
Frank Risler	Member	2027
Justin Tolomeo	First Vice President	2026
David Wege	Editor, General Orders	2027

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

**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.

**Milwaukee Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for June 11, 2026**

**Mail your reservations by Friday, June 5 to:**

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

**Call or email reservations to:**

**(262) 376-0568**  
**peilbes@gmail.com**

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_ (meal is \$35.00 per person) for \_\_\_\_ people for the  
June 11, 2026 meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee.

(Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)



# **BETWEEN THE COVERS**

## **The Iron Dice of Battle**

**Timothy B. Smith**

This review is on a book I received from our daughter at Christmas. The book is The Iron Dice of Battle Albert Sidney Johnston and the Civil War in the West. It is written by Timothy B. Smith published in 2023 by LSU Press. A relatively short book 181 pages. I always enjoyed reading books by Tim Smith as I find them to be accurate and well described any battle or topic he writes about. In addition, I've been on a couple of battlefield tours led by Mr. Smith and found him to be quite interesting and well-versed on the topic at hand. He definitely holds the interest of his audience and I think that carries over to his writing style as well.

I've wondered about Albert Sidney Johnston as a military commander and how he rose to prominence to command the Confederacy's army in the West. I've only read about Johnston's past in passing in a variety of books on Shiloh and some general comments on his leadership in general describing the Confederacy's early days in the Civil War in the West. So, I was very interested in getting into this book to discover the aura that surrounded Sydney Johnston and how he rose to rise to high command positions. In this work Mr. Smith states "the major thrust of this volume is an examination of Johnston's Civil War activity by looking at the flexible way he commanded." Mr. Smith shows that Johnston's personality was one of a methodical chess player and at other times a risk-taking gambler. He points Johnston's key "was the nuance between gambling acceptable and gambling irresponsibly, the difference in which the methodical chess player was not well versed,"

Smith points out Albert Sidney Johnston was a beloved friend and classmate of Jefferson Davis and came from a typical lineage of a general in the Civil War. He was a West Point-educated soldier, he spent many years in boring service on the frontier including stints in Missouri, Utah, California and Texas. While he served in the Black Hawk War and the Mexican War, he was mainly involved as a staff officer and hadn't led troops. He suffered with many personal tragedies as his first wife died, he suffered financial problems and other personal hardships... He became sometime after resigning from the US Army, commander of the Texas Army, but lost that command when he suffered a serious wound in a duel with another officer who was vying for the position. He eventually recovered and was later appoint Secretary of War for Texas. That didn't last long and tried his hand at farming with little success. In 1846 the Army called him back and he served on Zachery Taylor's staff. After the war he accepted a position as paymaster for the army and served in Texas.

A new opportunity opened for him when the need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry regiment developed. His friendship with Davis paid off and he was selected to command the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Johnston took the 2<sup>nd</sup> to Utah during the period of unrest there and eventually served in California until the war started. Unfortunately, after Johnston joined the Confederacy, Davis tapped him to run the Confederate operation in the West. Perhaps that selection was because Davis believed in his abilities, but perhaps he was overrated. I'm of the opinion he was overrated at least at the time. On the other hand, Lee also got off to a rough start and he proved himself over time. Johnston did not have that opportunity.

The author shows that Johnston suffered under a vast different set of circumstances. Among these are the amount of territory he was responsible for, his group of subordinates were far less in capabilities than those in Lee's command, the resources that were provided were less than the East and, perhaps, Johnston's approach to command and leadership was not as sharp as Lee's. Johnston's conduct during the earliest phases of the war in Tennessee also appears to have been marked with a strange diffidence and/or unforgivable trust in the commanders who served under him.

Mr. Smith explains that Johnston didn't have the ability and temperament to handle his responsibility. He was polite and did not make decisions quickly. He did not have the ability to think on the fly in battle and allowed events to shape him and his decisions. When things began to get beyond his control, he would take huge risks to overcome his weaknesses. Hence the title "Iron Dice of Battle." He took huge risks and those risks lead to his death on the Shiloh Battlefield in April, 1862.

With a life cut short there are many questions about what would have happened to the Confederacy had Johnston lived. Tim Smith is quick to point out that he held a hopeless command trying to defend large swathes of territory without enough soldiers or weapons and a bunch of lackluster subordinates. The author believes that no matter who the South had chosen to lead in the west it would not have made a difference to the war's outcome. The Battle of Shiloh was essentially a gamble to defeat a considerable Union force before reinforcements arrived. Mr. Smith is clear that Albert Sidney Johnston was no Robert E. Lee. A conclusion I tend to agree with based on his past performance in other situations as well as the way he handled his duties in the West Confederacy.

I like this book and found it very informative as all Tim Smith's writings are. And if you've not read any biographies on Albert Sydney Johnston, this is the book for you as a student of the Civil War and for the information on the Confederate operations in the West

**submitted by Bruce Klem**

**Ethnic Regiments of the Army of the Cumberland**  
presented by Dan Masters

The Upper Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio provided the bulk of the soldiers for the Army of the Cumberland, the Federal government's second largest Civil War army. Dan Master's program will highlight several of the ethnic regiments—including the 24th Illinois (German) 32nd Indiana (German), 35th Indiana (Irish), 2nd Missouri (German), 9th Ohio (German), 10th Ohio (Irish), and 15th Wisconsin (Scandinavian) -- that served with this potent fighting force.

**John Don't Call Me Hunt Morgan and the Not-So-Great Raid of 1863**  
presented by Darryl Smith

Darryl Smith's presentation will discuss John H. Morgan's Indiana-Ohio Raid from a different perspective – one that shows the raid was not the successful effort that some historians claim it to be – and how it adversely impacted operations in Tennessee. The result was not some grand effort, but instead led to the destruction of a Confederate cavalry division.

**Hazardous Duty: Civil War Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes**  
presented by Brendon Bailod

Raw materials from the Great Lakes region fueled the industrialization of America and played a key role in developing the Union's capacity during the American Civil War. Hundreds of ships were lost in the years prior to the Civil War due to southern opposition to harbor appropriations for the Great Lakes. Hundreds more were lost during the Civil War as they sailed east with cargoes of grain, iron ore and copper. This talk will tell the story of the Great Lakes role in the Civil War through the lens of Great Lakes shipwrecks.

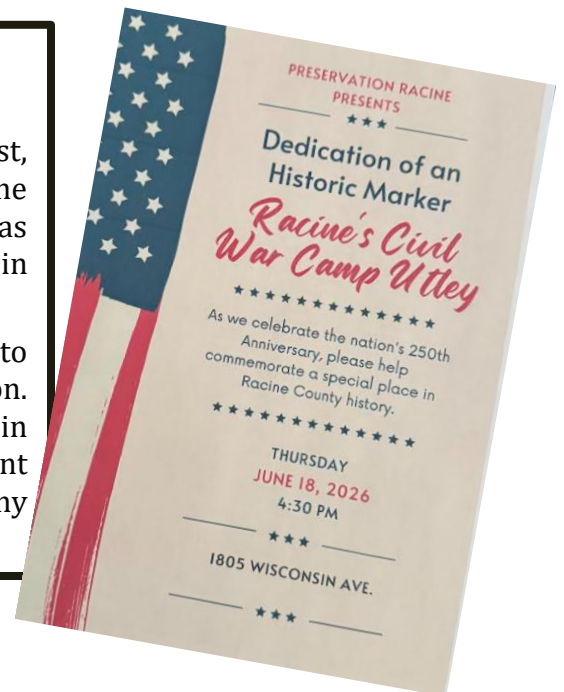
**The Western Sanitary Commission**  
presented by Dana Shoaf

The Western Sanitary Commission, though overshadowed by the larger United States Sanitary Commission in the east, performed invaluable work. Union General John C. Fremont, Reverend William Greenleaf Eliot, James E. Yeatman, and Dorothea Dix established the WSC in August 1861. Headquartered in St. Louis, the hard-working doctors, civilians, and nurses of the WSC established hospitals, administered medical services, and improved sanitation in camps. Additionally, the WSC established a fleet of hospital ships to travel throughout the sprawling Western Theater and provide aid from the Battle of Wilson's Creek until the end of the war.

**Camp Utley Marker Dedication**  
**June 18 at 4:30 PM**

At the start of the Civil War, William Utley, a strong abolitionist, was tasked with organizing the Wisconsin volunteers, which he did, recruiting 30,000 soldiers for the Union army. In 1862, he was commissioned as Colonel of the Twenty-Second Wisconsin Infantry, made up of primarily Racine County men.

The regiment was trained in Racine at Camp Utley and sent to Kentucky, which, though a slave state, fought with the Union. Troops were ordered to return any freedom-seekers arriving in their camp to their enslavers, but Utley refused. The regiment became known as the "Abolitionist Regiment" and sent many freedom-seekers north.





## Attacking the Arteries of Rebellion

The Civil War Time Travelers recently made a trip to Vicksburg and Mobile. The theme of the tour was to focus a little on riverine combat at Vicksburg, while highlighting the combined army and navy might of Federal forces that eventually reduced the Gibraltar of the Confederacy. Our guides at Vicksburg were Rick Martin for the action at Raymond and Champion Hill, and then Terry Winschel for the siege itself. A visit by General John Pemberton (Morgan Gates) was a pleasant planned surprise at dinner one night.

In Mobile we visited both Forts Gaines and Blakely. All three of these stops were incredible. Our guide at Fort Blakely was Mike Bunn, who literally wrote the book on that late-war battle.

Our group left Wisconsin on April 18, with our first stop being the Drury Inn- Sikeston, MO. After making good use of the Kickback Supper and freely using our drink tickets, we settled in for a presentation in the meeting room. Our speaker was retired teacher Barbara Kay of St. Louis. She introduced us to the story of the Sultana Disaster. Many had never heard of the tragedy that unfolded with that ill-fated sidewheeler. Barb made sure that we heard the story in all of its awful details. She highlighted the unintended consequences of allowing greed and corruption to influence the mission of sending these men home. The result, unfortunately and tragically, was the deadliest maritime disaster in American history.

Next, we spent two days and three nights in Vicksburg. Retired Colonel Rick Martin took us to Grant's Canal, explaining clearly that Grant settled on a siege at Vicksburg only after multiple other options, including direct assaults on May 19 and 22, resulted in failure. He took us to the fight at Raymond, where outnumbered Confederates misread Federal numbers, resulting in a fairly catastrophic beating. At the Coker House, Rick brought out some pretty awesome maps. A map often helps one visualize what a speaker is saying, and they certainly did in this case. After lunch we dropped Rick off at his vehicle in Vicksburg and proceeded to the Biedenharn Museum (Coca Cola) and the Vicksburg Civil War Museum, run by a gentleman named Charles Pendleton. The Civil War Museum is chock-full of munitions, arms, prints, and more. You are strongly encouraged to visit Mr. Pendleton's labor of love should you ever be in Vicksburg! It is a real treasure.

On Tuesday, Terry Winschel took us around the national battlefield. He laid out the siege in epic story form filled with human interest stories. The Wisconsin troops were given their just due, as were the other Midwestern units from Illinois and Michigan. Sadly, the Illinois Monument was receiving some long-needed repair, so we couldn't enter. We traveled the Graveyard Road, squeezed through the narrow defile that turned the approach to the Third Louisiana Redan into a killing zone, and again marveled at the courage of the men in blue and in gray who fought over the Vicksburg landscape. Terry took his leave from the group after four solid hours on interpretation and story-telling. After a sub sandwich lunch at the USS Cairo and the required exploration there, CWTT headed through an underpass beneath Clay Street towards a less visited portion of the park. Our goal was to tell the story of the action at the Texas Redoubt. We wanted to hear the story of the 29<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, which we did in their own words from letters home.

On Wednesday, April 22, our journey across Mississippi towards Mobile took us to the USS Alabama Memorial Park. From a WWII submarine, to tanks, trucks, and planes, this park did not disappoint. The battleship itself is a massive monument to the service members who served aboard those mighty vessels.

Thursday found us touring Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island in the morning. There we were given an excellent presentation by Robert. He fired off an Enfield rifle, a mountain howitzer, and even a 30 lb. siege gun. He was rewarded with appropriate "oohs and aahs" as our innards vibrated to the gun's concussion. Robert went on the tell of conditions Southern troops faced while on duty in the fort, and did justice to the battle in Mobile Bay as well.

Our final stop before the long trek to Wisconsin was spent at Fort Blakely. Not only did we have opportunity to explore some significant period earthworks, we also were in for a view of the battlefield from the water! We climbed aboard the Delta Explorer, a pontoon boat used expressly for river tours. As Mike Bunn narrated, the group explored Confederate positions from the Tensaw River. The unique perspective from the river was informative. We cruised past Confederate gun emplacements built by engineers using enslaved labor. These were marvels of design, but are slowly being lost to the strong current of the Tensaw as it empties into Mobile Bay.

Throughout the trip CWTT members added their insights to our tour. Kay Wege discussed Civil War mascots Old Abe and Old Douglas. Tom Arliskas found a new hero as he explored David Farragut and explained his service. Steve Thomas talked about Naval Chaplains. Terry Arliskas spoke through the letters of men of the 29<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, their voices telling us what they saw in their own words. Paul Eilbes shared the importance of the naval arm on the Mississippi. Paul Zehren shared the story of WWII battleships as the USS Alabama loomed magnificently in the background.

Our final evening always closes with thanks to the group, a meal with fellowship, and a little light entertainment. This year folks presented a little play entitled *The Siege of Vicksburg: As Told by Those Who Witnessed Said Event*. The cast gave a performance worthy of a Tony Award and ad-libbed the crowd in tears of laughter with their antics.



# Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.



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