



THE DRUM & BUGLE
Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table
Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
March 2020, Volume 17, Issue 3

Speaker: Richard Schaus
Topic: "Lee is Trapped and Must be Taken: Eleven Fateful Days After Gettysburg"
When: Monday, March 9, 2020
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 p.m.

"Lee is Trapped and Must be Taken: Eleven Fateful Days After Gettysburg" Richard Schaus, March 9, 2020

Our March speaker will be Richard R. Schaus, Sergeant Major, US Army (Ret.), who served on active duty for more than 30 years in a variety of army and joint military intelligence assignments both at home and abroad. Rich is a

lifelong student of the Civil War and American military history, and the Gettysburg Campaign in particular. **Winner, Edwin C. Bearss Scholarly Research Award and Winner, 2019, Hugh G. Earnhart Civil War Scholarship Award, Mahoning Valley Civil War Round Table**

His topic for our March Round Table Dinner Meeting is based upon the book that he has written, "*Lee is Trapped, and Must be Taken*": *Eleven Fateful Days after Gettysburg: July 4 to July 14, 1863*" and has been described as follows:

"Countless books have examined the battle of Gettysburg, but the retreat of the armies to the Potomac River and beyond has not been as thoroughly covered. "*Lee is Trapped, and Must be Taken*": *Eleven Fateful Days after Gettysburg: July 4 to July 14, 1863*, by Thomas J. Ryan and Richard R. Schaus goes a long way toward rectifying this oversight.

This comprehensive study focuses on the immediate aftermath of the battle and addresses how Maj. Gen. George G. Meade organized and motivated his Army of the Potomac in response to President Abraham Lincoln's mandate to bring about the "literal or substantial destruction" of Gen. Robert E. Lee's retreating Army of Northern Virginia. As far as the president was concerned, if Meade aggressively pursued and confronted Lee before he could escape across the flooded Potomac River, "the rebellion would be over."

The long and bloody three-day battle exhausted both armies. Their respective commanders faced difficult tasks, including the rallying of their troops for more marching and fighting. Lee had to keep his army organized and motivated enough to conduct an orderly withdrawal away from the field. Meade faced the same organizational and motivational challenges, while assessing the condition of his victorious but heavily damaged army, to determine if it had sufficient strength to pursue and crush a still-dangerous enemy. Central to the respective commanders' decisions was the information they received from their intelligence-gathering resources about the movements, intentions, and capability of the enemy. The eleven-day period after Gettysburg was a battle of wits to determine which commander better understood the information he received, and directed the movements of his army accordingly. Prepare for some surprising revelations.

Woven into this account is the fate of thousands of Union prisoners who

envisioned rescue to avoid incarceration in wretched Confederate prisons, and a characterization of how the Union and Confederate media portrayed the ongoing conflict for consumption on the home front.

The authors utilized a host of primary sources to craft their study, including letters, memoirs, diaries, official reports, newspapers, and telegrams, and have threaded these intelligence gems in an exciting and fast-paced narrative that includes a significant amount of new information. *“Lee is Trapped, and Must be Taken”* is a sequel to Thomas Ryan’s *Spies, Scouts, and Secrets in the Gettysburg Campaign*, the recipient of the Bachelder-Coddington Literary Award and Gettysburg Civil War Round Table Distinguished Book Award."

"Molding a Legend: The Iron Brigade and the Summer 1862 Occupation of Fredericksburg "

by Eric Mink

A Review of the February 2020 program by Greg Mertz

A Civil War legend was born at Brawner’s Farm on August 28, 1862 during the Second Battle of Manassas. Four Union regiments from western states – three from Wisconsin and one from Indiana – were in their first engagement together. Their opponent was another legendary command – the Confederate “Stonewall” Brigade. The brigade of soldiers from western Union states suffered staggering losses. All four regimental commanders and 32% of some 2700 men in the brigade were also casualties of the battle.

As the men marched from the plains of Manassas to South Mountain and Antietam’s Miller’s Cornfield, the brigade lost 49% of its numbers over a mere three weeks. Either army commander Gen. George B. McClellan or I corps commander Gen. Joseph Hooker declared that the brigade’s position at South Mountain’s Turner’s Gap was unbending, making the analogy that the brigade was like “iron.” The legend born at Brawner’s Farm increased in stature as the men now had a name – the Iron Brigade. In what at least one Iron Brigade historian declared to be the final battle of the famous unit, a staggering 1,100 men fell, out of the 1,800 soldiers to fight in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Though the legend was born at Brawner’s Farm, the roots of that legend -- our speaker Eric Mink argued -- were established along the banks of the

Rappahannock River when the brigade was part of the Union occupation of Fredericksburg during the summer of 1862. It was at this place and time when the brigade built the cohesion that would be so instrumental in marking it as a unique and fierce fighting unit. It was during the experiences over the four months immediately prior to Brawner Farm that the men made a commitment to each other and dedicated themselves to their mission.

When regiments making up the brigade formed in Washington, DC, their only enemies were boredom and homesickness. In mid-March, 1862, the command marched to Alexandria to await water transportation to Fort Monroe and McClellan's Peninsula Campaign against Richmond from the east. But the next day, they were marched back to camp. Instead of being part of the Army of the Potomac, the brigade and the remainder of Union I corps were assigned to the Department of the Rappahannock. Assigned to select a position south of Washington from which they might defend the capital and also aid McClellan's thrust by applying pressure on Richmond from the north, the brigade arrived in Falmouth on April 23.

Since the Confederates had destroyed the RF&P railroad between Aquia Landing on the Potomac River and Fredericksburg, the line had to be repaired in order to supply the 40,000 men of the department and support an advance on Richmond. It was this act of rebuilding the railroad that Mink stressed was extremely impactful in the development of what was first called the "Western Brigade." Although the men complained that they were not seeing any action, the tasks that they engaged in built a comradery and sense of purpose that would serve them well when they eventually faced combat.

Bridges needed to be built and the woodsmen of the Western Brigade were issued shovels. They watched with disgust as men from the streets of New York City struggled with tools that the westerners were well acquainted with – axes. A colonel of the westerners declared that his men could cut enough wood in a week to complete a structure 400 feet across the 80-foot deep gorge of Potomac Creek. The men of the future Iron brigade would chop down two million feet of wood and the bridge was constructed in nine days. Lincoln was impressed by the structure, complimenting the ingenuity by declaring that the whole thing was made of "beanpoles and cornstalks." The men then turned their efforts to a bridge across the Rappahannock.

In constructing the bridges, the brigade built a strong esprit de corps. Through hard work and teamwork in pursuit of a common goal the men formed a bond that held in the even more difficult challenges on the field of combat yet ahead.

But the Union troops did not continue their advance beyond Fredericksburg. Confederate Gen. Thomas J. Jackson and his 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign caused Union officials to retain the Department of the Rappahannock troops where they might defend Washington against a raid from "Stonewall." The Wisconsin and Indiana troops shifted northwest of Fredericksburg, getting in position to intercept Jackson, but eventually returned. Next, the troops responded to rumors of a Confederate buildup in Gordonsville with an expedition to that rail junction, while another rapid march in the heat took them to Frederick's Hall. While the troops saw precious little fighting, the forced marches put the men in campaign trim.

As the brigade camped just north of Chatham in what is today's Pratt Park, the men interacted with the local population. Women openly displayed their distain for the hated Yankees. The time in Fredericksburg was also the first opportunity for many of these soldiers to meet the enslaved of the Confederacy. An estimated 10,000 enslaved passed through Fredericksburg that spring and summer to the freedom the presence of the Union army provided. One of the soldiers in the brigade reported that his "conscience was awakened" by his exposure to African Americans, and he hoped the war would result in an end to slavery. Their experience in Fredericksburg caused many of the men from Wisconsin and Indiana to view their mission with a new clarity of purpose.

Perhaps the single most influential aspect of the brigade's tenure in Fredericksburg occurred when John Gibbon was appointed to command the unit. The Philadelphia born, North Carolina raised West Point graduate with two brothers and a cousin in the Confederate army, was a strict disciplinarian. He demanded that they bathe regularly, that they replace the fences they took down for firewood and he drilled them incessantly. He also had them wear the hat and coat of the dress uniform, along with leggings and gloves. It did not take the troops long to develop an intense dislike of Gibbon. The general once emerged from his tent to discover his horse wearing the white leggings his men so despised. But the hats in particular gave the men a distinct appearance and the men had pride in the way they looked.

The time the men of the future Iron Brigade spent in Fredericksburg was not wasted. The work on railroad bridges, the excursions from Fredericksburg, the exposure to slavery, the drill and the unique uniform all contributed to a cohesion. Their tenure in Fredericksburg proved to be the foundation for the legend to come.

Ongoing Reminder

Please contact Bob Jones to order your dinner in advance or to confirm your dinner reservation. Please call Bob Jones @ 540-399-1702 or send him your e-mail at cwrtddinner@yahoo.com.

REMINDER: Beginning in 2020, dinner will be \$26 for members and \$30 for non-members.

The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg By Bob Jones

As a courtesy, the RVCWRT provides as a regular feature each month, the ongoing scheduled speakers for the CWRTF's 2018 Program Year. The Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg normally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month, except for one meeting held on the third Wednesday of June 2020. Dinner Meetings are held at the UMW's Jepson Center located at:

[1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA](http://1119HanoverStreet.com)

Dinner cost is \$32.00 per person.

Advance reservations should be made by email: dinner@cwrtf.org or telephone: 540-361-2105.

CWRTF's Scheduled Speakers for the 2020 Program Year:

Feb. 26, 2020	Sarah Kay Bierle	"Call Out the Cadets: The Battle of New Market May 15, 1864"
Mar. 25, 2020	Dr. Caroline E. Janney	"Burying the Dead, But Not the Past. The Ladies

		Memorial Association”
Apr. 22, 2020	Gordon Rhea	“The Generalship of Lee and Grant in the Overland Campaign”
May 27, 2020	John Biemeck	“Civil War Ordnance”
Jun. 17, 2020	Paul Kahan	“The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant: Preserving the Civil War’s Legacy”



From the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS)-
Massachusetts Photograph Collection.

Did You Know the 2020 Bus Trip is here already?

Did you know it is that time of year again?

This month, and maybe the next few months leading up to the bus trip, we will hold off on the obscure Civil War and Fredericksburg facts.

The 2020 bus trip is upon us. The topic is McClellan and Lee at the Seven Days. We will be visiting Chickahominy Bluffs, Beaver Dam Creek, Gaines

Mill, and Malvern Hill. Our guide will be Col. Marc Thompson USAF (Ret). The price will include transportation, lunch, site fees, and guided tour.

Members & Guests are \$90, after May 1st it is \$100. Non-members are \$100.

Bus will depart from the Gordon Rd. commuter lot at 8:00 a.m and return at 6 p.m.

For information and reservations see Bob at the dinner or email at cwrtdinner@yahoo.com, Bobnpeg1954@gmail.com or call 540-399-1702.

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Who We Are

The Drum and Bugle Newsletter is published monthly, by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Each month, The Drum and Bugle newsletter is also placed on our web-site, www.RVCWRT.org. Yearly membership dues are \$35.00 for an individual, \$45.00 for families, and only \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the ongoing preservation of Civil War sites.

The RVCWRT Executive Committee:

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