



GENERAL ORDERS

The Newsletter of the
Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.
Our 64th Year
and The Iron Brigade Association



MARCH 7, 2013

LANCE HERDEGEN

The Iron Brigade in Civil War and Memory



Photo © Richard Glaser, courtesy of Reclaiming Our Heritage.

The young generation can hardly realize that their modest neighbors are soldiers who have fought on more fields of battle than the Old Guard of Napoleon, and have stood fire in far greater firmness.

Rufus R. Dawes, 1885

The Iron Brigade was one of the most celebrated military organizations of the American Civil War. Composed originally of the Second, Sixth and Seventh Wisconsin and Nineteenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry regiments, it was reinforced after Antietam in October 1862 by the Twenty-fourth Michigan Volunteer Infantry. Battery B of the Fourth U.S. Artillery was also attached to the brigade for much of the war and volunteers from the infantry regiments were trained to serve the battery.

In the first weeks at Washington in 1861, the provisional brigade included the Fifth Wisconsin and Governor Alexander Randall of Wisconsin had hoped to form an all-Wisconsin unit. But when the Seventh Wisconsin arrived in August 1861, the Army transferred the Fifth Wisconsin from the brigade instead of the Nineteenth Indiana. Of the four regiments remaining only the Second Wisconsin had

arrived at Washington early enough to fight at First Bull Run.

The only all-Western organization serving in the Eastern Theater, the "Black Hat Brigade" – named for their distinctive felt dress hat – took part in the fighting at Gainesville, Second Bull Run, South Mountain (where George B. McClellan claimed he gave them their "Iron Brigade" name), Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. At Gettysburg on July 1, the brigade saved the high ground west of town that proved decisive in the Union victory, but was nearly destroyed in the process.

But aside from its early history to Gettysburg in 1863, the full illustrious history of the brigade is often overlooked. Our March Speaker, Lance Herdegen, will rectify this oversight when he takes an overall look at the famous unit. His recent book, *The Iron Brigade in Civil War and Memory: The Black Hats from Bull Run to Appomattox and Thereafter*, is the first book-length account of the legendary combat unit and is based on decades of research and includes scores of previously unpublished letters, photos, journals, and other primary accounts.

A former president of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Herdegen is the award-winning author of several books on Civil War topics. His recent full history of the Iron Brigade was a selection of the History Book Club. His former book, *Those Damned Black Hats: The Iron Brigade in the Gettysburg Campaign*, won the Army Historical Foundation's Distinguished Writing Award. He is the former director of the Institute for Civil War Studies at Carroll University and is presently chair of the Wisconsin Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission. He recently was inducted into the Milwaukee Press Club Hall of Fame.

Lance lives in the Town of Spring Prairie, Walworth County, Wisconsin. His newest book will be available at the meeting for purchase and signing.

See Savas Beatie Interview with Lance Herdegen on page 8.

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March 2013

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MARCH MEETING AT A GLANCE

Lance Herdegen

"The Iron Brigade in Civil War and in Memory"

The Wisconsin Club

900 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee
(Jackets required for dining room)

5:30 p.m. – Staff Meeting

(Open to all members)

6:15 p.m. – Registration & Social Hour

6:45 p.m. – Dinner

7:30 p.m. – Program

Dinner – **\$25 by reservation.**

Deadline: Monday, March 4, 2013

See page 9.

Speaker and topic are subject to change.

In case of inclement weather, listen to

WTMJ or WISN radio.

www.civilwarwi.org

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE NEWS

2012-2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, the Nominating Committee of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee recommends the following slate of nominees for the upcoming election of members to the Board of Directors:

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Donna Agnelly | Tom Arliskas |
| Roman Blenski | Crain Bliwas |
| Paul Eilbes | |

The slate will be voted on at the election held during the April meeting. Newly elected directors begin their duties upon election and typically serve three-year terms.

CWRT ANNUAL FUND

The following members have shown their generous commitment by making an investment in the CWRT Annual Fund. This list reflects donations received through February 15, 2013.

Major Contributor (\$500 and above)

In Memoriam: Eugene and Caroline Jamrozy
James Wiensch
Bob Lieding
Crain Bliwas

Benefactor: (\$400 and above)

Sponsor: (\$300 - \$390)

Allan Kasprzak and Trudi Schmitt
Eugene and Jane Jamrozy

Patron: (\$200 - \$299)

Associate: (\$100 - \$199)

Michael Benton
Richard Gross
Dr. Bob Karczewski
Paul Eilbes
Doug Haag
Grant Johnson
Jerome A. Kowalski
Robert and Linda Mann
Laura Rinaldi
Dave and Helga Sartori

WHEN YOU CANCEL YOUR RESERVATION

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

2013 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

April 11, 2013: John Fitzpatrick, Lincoln at Gettysburg

May 9, 2013: Ethan Rafuse, Lee and Gettysburg

June 13, 2013 (at the Country Club): Timothy B. Smith, Battle of Corinth

ANNOUNCEMENTS • EVENTS • MEETINGS

March 11, 2013

Manitowoc Civil War Round Table, 7 p.m.
Manitowoc Historical Society Heritage Center
Speaker: Dave Wege

March 12, 2013

Waukesha Civil War Round Table, 7 p.m.
Citizens Bank of Mukwonago Waukesha Branch
Speaker: Doug Dammann: "Elmer Ellsworth: What Happened to the 50 Men Who Went on Tour with Ellsworth and Fought in the Civil War."

March 19, 2013

Prairieville Irregulars Round Table, 7 p.m.
Boardroom, Campus Center Building, Carroll University
Speaker: Tom Finley: "Abraham Lincoln and the Crucible of Fredericksburg"

March 24, 2013

West Side Soldiers Aid Society
Annual Meeting/Pot Luck Supper, 1:30 p.m.
Ben Hunt Room of Hales Corners Library
Speaker: Patrick Caffrey, Founder and President of Brain Scans for Warriors Inc.

MILWAUKEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE QUARTERMASTER'S REGALIA

What better way to show off your pride in our organization! All items are made of first-rate, quality materials, modestly embroidered with the Round Table/Iron Brigade logo, along with your name or initials.

| ITEM | COST |
|--|---------|
| Hooded Sweatshirt in Northern Blue | \$35.00 |
| Baseball Cap | \$10.00 |
| Blue Brief Case | \$25.00 |
| Blue Light-Weight Sweatshirt..... | \$30.00 |
| Blue Izod Polo Shirt..... | \$40.00 |
| Blue Dress Shirt | \$40.00 |
| Blue Fleece-Lined Jacket..... | \$60.00 |
| Iron Brigade Pin..... | \$5.00 |
| CWRT Pin..... | \$5.00 |
| Bugle Pin..... | \$5.00 |
| Iron Brigade Medal | \$25.00 |
| Red River Medal | \$25.00 |
| CWRT 60 Year Medal..... | \$10.00 |

Contact Roman Blenski, Quartermaster, 4601 W. Holt Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53219, (414) 327-2847, dbcpmilw@execpc.com or see him in person at the Monthly Meeting at Book Raffle.

GETTYSBURG REMEMBRANCE DAY 150

While the 150th Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address will be commemorated, as customary, on November 19, 2013, the dates for the weekend activities have been changed from November 15-17 to November 22-24. The Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremonies will take place on Saturday, November 23, as will the 11th Annual Illumination sponsored by the Gettysburg Foundation at the Soldiers' National Cemetery. Early hotel and Licensed Battlefield Guide tour reservations are highly recommended. For additional event information, visit the Gettysburg Convention and Visitors Bureau at www.gettysburg.travel/150/event.asp or call www.gettysburg.travel/150/event.asp (717) 334-6274.



For more information on programs and events taking place at the Civil War Museum and the Kenosha Public Museums please call (262) 653-4140 or visit www.thecivilwarmuseum.org

The Civil War Museum now has an official Facebook Page! Learn about special up-to-the-minute features and activities on www.facebook.com/CWMKenosha.

Be sure to hit the "like" button.



Thanks to the generous support of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table, the Prairieville Irregulars, and many individual donors, the West Side Soldiers Aid Society is pleased to announce the publication of *Milwaukee's Soldiers Home*, a collection of 205 historic photos spanning 1867-1967. Release date is scheduled for April 8, 2013. Visit www.wssas.org or www.historicmilwaukeeva.org for additional information and booksigning events.

ARTILLERY DISCUSSION AND DISPLAY

Presented by Cushing's Battery

Saturday, March 9, 2013, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

THE UNIFORMS, CLOTHING AND ARMS OF THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI

Presented by Tom Arliskas

Saturday, March 9, 2013, 1 p.m.

Arliskas will look at the Battles of Bloomfield, Wilson's Creek, Siege of Lexington, and Pea Ridge and will present notes and photos on the appearance of the armies who fought there. Much of the information presented will be new research gleaned from over 40 years of research. The class is geared to those with an interest in the Trans-Mississippi theater, living history, or who want to learn more about the uniforms, clothing or firearms of these western soldiers. \$15/\$10 Friends of the Museum

DANCES OF THE CIVIL WAR ERA

Instructor Patricia Lynch

Saturday, March 23, 2013, 10 a.m.

Saturday, April 27, 2013, 1 p.m.

Grab your dancing shoes! Patricia Lynch of the West Side Soldiers Aid Society will provide instruction in basic dances of the Civil War era and proper etiquette for a formal ball. Casual attire is fine and dance partners are not required! Don't forget to sign up for the Grand Union Ball the evening of April 27 when you can dance the waltz and Virginia Reel to live music. \$10/\$5 Friends of the Museum

THIRD ANNUAL CIVIL WAR EXPO

Saturday, March 23, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Living history and heritage groups from around the Midwest will have informative tables set up throughout the Civil War Museum to introduce visitors to their programs and interpretations.

Lance Herdegen will present a program at 1 p.m. about his latest book. A book signing will take place after the presentation.

5TH ANNUAL GREAT LAKES CIVIL WAR FORUM

The Civil War Museum is pleased to announce the date and speakers for the 5th Annual Great Lakes Civil War Forum, Saturday, September 14, 2013, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This year's speakers are:

Ms. Betsy Estilow, Retired Professor of Biology and History, Hood College, Frederick, Maryland, will speak on the *Red Rover* and the other Union hospital ships of the Vicksburg Campaign.

Dr. Larry Hewitt, Author and former Professor of History, Southeastern Louisiana University, presents *Port Hudson: the Most Photographed Battlefield of the Civil War*.

Mr. Lance Herdegen, Author and Professor of History, Carroll University presents *The 6th Wisconsin and the Bloody Railroad Cut*.

Dr. James Marten, Chair of the History Department, Marquette University, will consider the impact the Battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg had on the children of those locations.

LINCOLN NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD AND BLUE RAY

In a film directed by Steven Spielberg based on the screenplay by Tony Kushner, Daniel Day Lewis, in his Oscar-worthy performance, delivered "an unimpeachable performance as the United States' 16th president," wrote Peter DeBruge in *Variety*.

A.O. Scott of the New York Times called *Lincoln* "a rough and noble democratic masterpiece – an omen, perhaps, that movies for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Pick up your copy now to enjoy and savor all the remarkable performances by this extremely talented group of actors.



FROM THE FIELD

March 1863

Camp at Helena Arkansas March 20, 1863

Brother Sam

Jay Miner says that I must write too now that I have got him into it and since it is the same envelope, although I can think of nothing now that will interest you and am afraid I shall not find anything this time, for I write so often and there are so few incidents in camp when in one place but I am afraid you will find me a "man of words" instead of ideas. Mary used to tell me when comparing a man's work to that of a woman's that there was such a monotony in a woman's work that it made it a great deal harder than it would be if there were more change. I believe that now, for if this is any life with any less change than this, tell me what it is and you will not find the subscriber there. The other night C. Brewster borrowed a violin and a few cotillions were danced, the ladies were all gentlemen and the hall the company street. The music sounded natural and Orange's strides looked natural, the rest didn't seem much like the parties in Taylor's Hall to me at any rate. Ladies, white ones, are certainly a curiosity here. I think that could some of the Northern women see the colored ladies in Helena with hats, curls, fancy crinoline and every article of dress that makes Northern ladies fashionable they would adopt an entirely new style of dress, especially the crinoline. "Colored Gentlemen", Uncle Sam has generously clothed the same as he does the "sogers" so there is no danger of the "exquisites" at home bringing disgrace by their coif. I wish Uncle Sam would arm his niggers and let him fight instead of sending them to such places as St. Louis when they have nothing to do but cook rations drawn for them from Uncle Sam's storehouses. There is no doubt but they would make the best of soldiers, no one denies that. But some such writers as "Oak" that want to fight this war independent of anyone else, of turning the South's own weapons against him and taking that which is now a burden to us and making them useful, while this nation is struggling against this awful rebellion, put me in mind of the independence of a hog on ice. When we can't hardly stand, traitors at our backs and in front talk of independence and refuse help. It is too ridiculous to think about. Jay says if Uncle Sam will give him a furlough of thirty days he'll fetch James Dodge's scalp back. He couldn't I think be better employed unless it was to get the edition's of the "news" with his. Perhaps another "Kentucky Jane" company in Hartford would be a benefit to this time — As I write our Brass Band, started within the past two months is practicing in a tent near by. That sounds natural. When the band started the officers paid all but ten dollars on each installment and the Colonel promised them that they should be excused from drill as soon as they commenced to play for the Regiment. I presume they will be excused. They offered me an instrument but Wm. thought I had best not take one and of course I done as he wished me. They offered to give the instrument to induce me to join the Band. I have been almost sorry ever since I didn't join them for I know I should have enjoyed myself more there than anywhere else. You can't imagine my feelings while sitting here this evening, hearing them play some of the old pieces as we used to play in Taylor's Hall last summer, such as "Red, White and Blue", "Sweet Home" and "The Star Spangled Banner" and besides, they play some newer pieces equally as good.

Jay and I are writing in our tent this (Friday) evening while on the outside it is raining hard. A regular old fashioned thunder shower. There is the roll for roll-call. I have been out to roll call and am now going to finish this letter provided "Taps" don't blow before I finish tonight. Lloyd just came into the tent and of course he had to joggle and bother me a little while just to hear me scold.

Saturday, 21st. Henry starts for home this afternoon at four o'clock and I

must finish this between now and drill time — I understand James O. Lyman is at home now. Give him my respects. I wish he was here at Helena — We don't see many in the Wis. Reg'ts that we know. The 8th passed here a few days ago on its way to the pass. While stopping here they got into quite a fuss on account of the patrol guard trying to stop some of the men. The guard fired at one of the 8th the ball passing through one man's neck and one's hips. The 8th all took their guns, loaded them and were going to start for shore. Their officers persuaded them after while to keep quiet. One brick was hauled from shore that hit Gen. Prentiss on his back. I suppose he thought it time to do something then for he sent for the 11th Ind., the best drilled Reg't in this Department of the Army, who came down on a double quick to the boat, but there was no need of them when they arrived there. The 11th Wis. passed here yesterday on their way down. I seen only one or two from that Regt. By the way I saw the two Armitage boys from Neosho. They looked very healthy and seemed perfectly contented. It is reported here that the 10th is at Memphis. Hope the report is true for you should have a chance to see him if it is. The 28th Wis., Col. Lewis, is at Yazoo Pass or perhaps they are farther down now.

Well 1 a.m. I think that I have done well in writing this long letter to home and do likewise! If you don't I shall stop writing long letters to you. I will write to Cora next. You will like Henry. Do Remember me to all.

Your Brother John J. Barney
(Co. I, 29th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry)

John Barney would be killed at Champions Hill in just 2 months time — shot through the neck. He was only 20 years old.

Headquarters, 2d Wisconsin Vol's Bells Plains, VA, March 18, '63

Dear James: — Yours of the 9th inst. I have just read with much pleasure and also with feelings of deep sorrow; pleasure to have you express such good loyal sentiments; sorrow to know that there are any considerable number of men in our state who dare openly proclaim hostility to this holy war.

It would be bad enough to know that they thought treason of that kind; but that public sentiment has so fallen that any man in this time of tribulation and sorrow would dare to lift his voice agn't the Government is almost past belief; yet I know it is so.

It is but poor encouragement to the soldiers in the field, for if this is not a just war on our side, then we are no better than a band of robbers, but if it is a holy war, waged for a holy purpose, the army should hear nothing but words of hope and encouragement from those at home.

Any man who makes serious opposition to the Government at this time is no better than a traitor as such he is regarded by the army. Men who advocate peace on any grounds, this side of the "Union as it was," is, whether he intends it or not, an enemy to the country...

All men should be willing and glad to contribute their means and, if necessary, their lives on their country's altar; he who is not falls short of being a good citizen. I have all confidence in our cause and feel sure that we shall be victorious over the traitors both South and North. Were the Copperheads to hear the opinions of the army, they would at least be more prudent from motives of fear.

We do not believe that this is a fit time to stand stately and quibble and find fault with the government so long as the government is pushing the war vigorously to a victorious end. It is a time for all men to put their

shoulders to the wheel and give a long, strong, hearty, willing, helping push and when this is done we shall push forward to a speedy triumph. I hope, and you can not but believe, that those who now express their opposition will take a sober second thought, change front, and enter like patriots, in earnest support of the right.

Your friend,
Col. Fairchild
Second Wisconsin

**From the Seventh Wisconsin
Camp Near Belle Plaine, VA
March 14, 1863**

Mesers. Editors:

In accordance with my promise I shall now endeavor to give you a review of the week. The weather has been cold — yesterday and to-day quite cold. We have had one little flurry of snow, and one or two moderate rain storms...

It has been a little over a year since the Army of the Potomac made its debut. It has been engaged in many battles, but what has it all amounted to?

What had been gained? Many and many a brave man has gone to his long home — struck down in the vigor of manhood by the enemy's balls and others by disease; their bones lie moldering in the cold, cold grave far from home and friends with no one near to shed a parting tear.

War is glorious, yet horrible.

A year ago we started forth, full of buoyancy eager for the fray and expecting a speedy termination of the war. A year has passed — mark the change. That buoyant eager army has melted away and the few that still remain have settled down into a moodiness that has no parallel. True, new troops have poured in by thousands, but they are even worse than the old troops. It will require a great and decisive victory to raise the drooping spirit of the soldiers and may it come soon.

For the first time since we were at Fredericksburg last summer we were called upon to attend a funeral. Our regiment had but few in the hospital.



Harper's Weekly, March 21, 1863, "Rappahannock Mud"

PICKET. "Hallo, Comrade! you must find it pretty bad walking on the Roads hereabouts."

MAN IN THE MUD. "Walking? I ain't walking. I'm GENERAL HOOKER'S Orderly, and I've got a right smart horse under me, I tell you!"

This young man was a member of company F, by the name of Adelbert Staley. His parents live in Portage city. He enlisted in Grant county. On the 12th last he was well and hearty. After dinner, he with his tent mates went after wood. One of them got a load and came back to camp. Staley with his companion went to work to get their loads. Staley tried to carry a stick but it was too heavy. They split some off of it, still it was too heavy to carry the distance he would be obliged to, which was about half a mile. He said he could carry it if it was on his shoulder. Finally he got one end on a stump and by that means shouldered it and started for camp. In crossing a rut, over which there was a foot log, he slipped and fell, the left side of his head striking the log, and the piece he was carrying coming directly on the right side, thus catching his head between the two. His skull was crushed; the piece he was carrying cutting a horrible gash in the back part of his head. He was taken up insensible and conveyed to the hospital where he died. Thus we are deprived of a good brave and faithful soldier one who has endured the hardships of a long and arduous campaigning; one who has braved the danger of the battle-field, with all its horrors unscathed at last to be a victim of accident —

"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away."

A portion of the regiment went on picket duty yesterday. We do not now furnish as many men as heretofore. The brigade had to furnish a certain number, then each regiment its quota; it does not come so hard on the boys now.

S.J.M.

**From the 6th Regiment
Near Belle Plain, VA, March 25th, 1863**

Now brighter days in prospect swift ascend

Editors Republic:-

The gentle breath of spring is once more upon us, and the army of the Potomac which only awaits its earliest sun shine, will soon hurl itself on the enemies of the Republic with greater force than it has ever done before.

It is now an army, *consolidated united systematized*. Reformed in discipline, purged of disloyalty and insubordination, encouraged by an outspoken and loyal citizen community, and backed by a determination and unswerving administration it feels deeply its own consequent power and efficiency.

The changes that have been and are being wrought in this army, are many and distinguished. We shall enter upon the campaign of 1863 with that cogency and self confidence which only age and experience can confer. As it requires time for discipline, and as old troops are better than new, so is the army of the Potomac in 1863 better disciplined and more army-like than it was in 1862...

The first flush of military enthusiasm has died away and is succeeded by a sober and determined resolution to save the country at every hazard. The popularity of Gen. McClellan created more by the clamors of the Pennsylvania and New York press than by any deeds in the field, was too premature to be permanent or to withhold the confidence of the soldiers from other commanders...

Gen. Hooker is ever active in preparing his command for the coming campaign. He has inaugurated several changes relative to the transportation of baggage and ammunition that promise to curtail those unwieldy wagon trains, which hitherto have rendered the army totally incapable of making rapid marches. I trust that his new experiments may prove practicable and that he may prove himself to be the man for the times if there be such a personage now existing among us...

Such a spirit having supplanted the misguided enthusiasm of 1862 and in view of the encouraging support which the armies are receiving from the Government, we count with sanguine hearts on the campaign of 1863, as restoring peace to the country and submission to the Constitution of the United States.

H.J.H.

AND SO IT CONTINUES: March 1863...

Marking the Civil War Sesquicentennial

North and South faced bitter cold and deep snow at the start of the month. In the South the food distribution system was in need of repair and larger cities, like Richmond, faced near famine conditions. Vicksburg and Port Hudson still stood with little progress made over the winter months. In Virginia Hooker continued to prepare to move against Lee. In Tennessee Rosecrans and Bragg did little. The Confederate government saw signs that Vicksburg would soon be attacked and made efforts to try and save it. In the camps, the soldiers sat waiting for the weather to change and hoped for dry roads.

March 1, 1863 • The Federal Congress was preparing to end its session. President Lincoln met with Secretary of War Stanton and other officers about military appointments.

Julia A. Beach of Wallingford, Connecticut would present the 11th Connecticut Volunteers with a new flag. The flag and what remained of the old one presented to the regiment in 1861, were placed on the same staff and carried until the end of the war.

March 2, 1863 • The Federal Congress confirmed the appointment of four major and nine brigadier generals for the Regular Army. Thirty-three U.S. Army officers, found guilty by court-martial of various charges, were dismissed from the service.

In New Orleans Admiral Farragut would write:

I have recently seen persons from Mobile, and they all concur in the statement that provisions are very high, and very scarce even at those high figures. Flour, \$100 per barrel; bacon and meat of every kind, \$1 per pound; meal, \$20 per sack.

March 3, 1863 • President Lincoln signs a national conscription act. The act imposed a liability on all male citizens between twenty and forty-five with the exception of the physically and mentally unfit, men with certain types of dependents, those convicted of a felony, and various high Federal and state officials. Draft quotas would be set by the President based on population and the number of men already serving from each district. A drafted man could hire another as a substitute or purchase his way out for \$300.

March 4, 1863 • The Federal Congress adjourns.

March 5, 1863 • Federal forces continue to dig a canal opposite Vicksburg despite occasional shelling from the Confederate batteries in the city.

March 7, 1863 • On the Mississippi General Banks' Federal force moves from New Orleans north to Baton Rouge and toward Port Hudson in an operation set to cooperate with Grant's activities against Vicksburg.

Lieutenant General E. Kirby Smith assumed command of all Confederate forces west of the Mississippi.

In Baltimore the Federal army forbade the sale of "secession music" and confiscated all "secession" song sheets.

March 8, 1863 • Nathaniel Hawthorne would write to a British friend:

I never did really approve of the war, though you may have supposed so from the violence and animosity with which I controverted your notions about it, when I wrote last. But you are an Englishman, you know, and of course cannot have any correct ideas about our country, and even if you had, a true American is bound not to admit them. The war-party here do not look upon me as a reliably loyal man, and, in fact, I have been publicly accused of treasonable sympathies – whereas I sympathize with nobody and approve of nothing; and if I have any wishes on the

subject, it is that New England might be a nation by itself. But, so far as I can judge of the temper of the people, they mean to have a re-union; and if they really mean it, it will be accomplished. The North has never yet put out half its means, and there is a great deal of fight left in us yet.

March 9, 1863 • In Tennessee, Rosecrans braced for a Confederate attack.

At Vicksburg, Grant sends a fake ironclad made of logs with barrels for smokestacks past the batteries of Vicksburg drawing a large amount of fire.

At 2 a.m. twenty-nine men under John S. Mosby quietly entered the town of Fairfax County Court House, Virginia, and captured General E. H. Stoughton in his bed. Mosby's raid would capture not only the general but also two captains, thirty other prisoners, and fifty-eight horses along with arms and equipment. The officers were turned over as prisoners-of-war but were later exchanged. President Lincoln, upon hearing of the raid, commented: "I can make brigadier generals, but I can't make horses."

March 10, 1863 • Federal troops reoccupy Jacksonville, Florida. President Lincoln issues a proclamation of amnesty to soldiers absent without leave if they report before April 1; otherwise they would be arrested and treated as deserters.

March 11, 1863 • Federal gunboats and troops move through the waterways from Yazoo Pass off the Mississippi towards Vicksburg. Confederate Fort Pemberton successfully repels the first of several Union gunboat attacks and by March 16, the Federals would be forced to retreat – another effort against Vicksburg foiled.

Conscription was tightening in the Confederacy. Many people had previously been exempted due to their jobs or connections. Now the Bureau of Conscription in Richmond determined that all clerks in the departments, appointed later than October 11, 1862, were eligible for the draft.

March 12, 1863 • Admiral Farragut arrives in Baton Rouge to finalize the plans for the assault on Port Hudson.

A new paper, *The Sentinel*, was published for the first time in Richmond.

March 13, 1863 • The Confederate States Laboratory on Brown's Island in Richmond explodes.

Federal gunboats and troops renewed their bombardment at Fort Pemberton to no avail. At the end of the day, the fort still stood between them and Vicksburg.

[See article on page 9.]

March 14, 1863 • On the Mississippi, Admiral Farragut sent his squadron of seven ships against the shore batteries of Port Hudson in an attempt to run past them. The *Hartford* and *Albatross* were able to get through but the *Monangahela* and *Richmond* were damaged and had to drop back. The *Mississippi* with Captain Melancthon Smith and Lt. George Dewey aboard ran aground and could not be brought off the mudbar. She was set afire and abandoned. The following morning she blew up while floating downriver. George Dewey would escape to later become the hero of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War.

March 15, 1863 • In San Francisco the schooner *J.M. Chapman* was seized. The ship was suspected of being a commerce raider for the Confederacy. The cargo of guns, ammunition and other military stores was taken and the crew was confined to the island of Alcatraz.

March 16, 1863 • The Yazoo Pass expedition was coming to an end.

Grant was planning to launch a new effort against Vicksburg via Steele's Bayou.

March 17, 1863 • At Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock, Federal cavalry under General William W. Averell crossed the river and were strongly engaged by Confederate forces who rushed up to halt the Federal troops. A small but hard-fought fight resulted in Averell withdrawing in the late afternoon. John Pelham "the gallant Pelham" who had been heroic for the Confederacy at Fredericksburg was killed while he was observing the fight; the South mourned his loss.

March 18, 1863 • Lieutenant General Theophilus H. Holmes assumed command of the Confederate District of Arkansas. In Richmond, Hood's Texans marched through the city on their way back north to join Lee's army, south of Fredericksburg.

Pvt. Day, Co. B, 25th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in New Bern, North Carolina would write:

After months of idleness in camp, at last comes a change. At 4 o'clock p.m. orders came to break camp, pick up our traps and be ready to march in half an hour. Dark found seven companies of us on board the steamer Escort, bound for Plymouth...The night being dark and stormy, we waited till morning before leaving.

March 19, 1863 • Farragut's *Hartford* and *Albatross* engaged the shore batteries at Grand Gulf, Mississippi just below Vicksburg and proceeded on to the mouth of the Red River.

Pvt. Day aboard the *Escort* heading for Plymouth commented:

Heavy northeast storm blowing this morning...wind increases, the sound grows rough, the boat rolls, the boys grow sick, the water breaks on deck and many of them are getting wet; altogether the passage is rather unpleasant...

March 20, 1863 • In Richmond the snow was eight inches deep. Hood's Texans, stopped from going to Fredericksburg, engaged in snowball fights on Main Street.

Farragut sends a message to Grant and Admiral Porter offering his assistance in stopping the supplies from crossing at the mouth of the Red River.

President Lincoln, concerned over Vicksburg, asks Major General Stephens A. Hurlbut at Memphis, "What news have you? What from

Vicksburg? What from Yazoo Pass? What from Lake Providence? What generally?" Hurlbut would inform Lincoln of the unsuccessful efforts to reach Vicksburg.

March 21, 1863 • On Steele's Bayou Porter's gunboats backed by Sherman's troops were being harassed by Confederate sharpshooters positioned along the banks.

March 22, 1863 • Water-borne expeditions to attack Vicksburg from the rear were cancelled. Admiral Porter would describe them as "a most novel expedition. Never did those people expect to see ironclads floating where the keel of a flat boat never passed."

March 23, 1863 • Farragut's *Hartford* and *Albatross* attacked the Confederate batteries at Warrenton on the Mississippi below Vicksburg. Farragut would write to his wife:

I passed the batteries of Port Hudson with my chicken (Albatross) under my wing. We came through in safety...You know my creed: I never send others in advance when there is a doubt, and, being one on whom the country has bestowed its greatest honors, I thought I ought to take the risks which belong to them. So I took the lead...

March 24, 1863 • Another skirmish took place as the Federal expedition struggled through the swamps and lowlands – this time the skirmish occurred on Black Bayou. The skirmish would end the Steele Bayou effort as the gunboats and Sherman's troops slowly withdrew.

March 25, 1863 • Two Federal rams, the *Lancaster* and *Switzerland* make an attempt to run the Vicksburg batteries from north to south in order to join Admiral Farragut. The *Lancaster* was struck numerous times and would sink with most of the crew managing to escape. The *Switzerland* was badly disabled and would float down out of firing range to safety.

March 26, 1863 • Voters in West Virginia approved gradual emancipation of slaves. A Confederate congressional act authorized the impressment of forage or other property, including slaves, when necessary for the army in the field.

March 27, 1863 • Farragut's flagship, *Hartford*, ran past the guns at Warrenton on the Mississippi. Two days later it would be joined by the *Albatross*.

March 29, 1863 • Grant orders General McClelland to move his troops south from Milliken's Bend to New Carthage, below Vicksburg. Sherman and McPherson were to follow.

Sarah Rosetta Wakeman (alias Lyons) who enlisted in the 153rd New York Infantry in November 1862 and who remained undetected throughout her two years of service would write home to her father from Alexandria, Virginia:

You mustn't trouble yourself about me. I am contented...I believe that god will spare my life to come home once more...It would make your hair stand out to be where I have been. How would you like to be in the front rank and have the rear rank load and fire their guns over your shoulder? I have been there my Self. I am getting fat as a hog. The climate agrees with me first rate. I am the fattest fellow you ever see.

Sarah would die of chronic diarrhea in a Union army hospital in July 1864 with her masquerade intact.

March 31, 1863 • The month would end with Grant's operations from Milliken's bend to New Carthage well under way for another attempt at capturing the elusive Vicksburg. Confederate forces launched an attack on the Union garrison at Washington, North Carolina. The Confederate siege would last until mid-April. In Washington Lincoln attended a Union meeting.

And so it continues.



Ruins of the State Arsenal and Richmond & Petersburg Railroad Bridge, Alexander Gardner, Library of Congress, LC-B817- 7236

SAVAS BEATIE INTERVIEW WITH LANCE HERDEGEN

SB: You have been researching and writing about the Iron Brigade for decades. What is your fascination with this organization?

LH: I think it is because many of the soldiers were just regular folks from my home state who played such a key role in the Civil War. I can drive past their old farms and homesteads and through their hometowns on the same roads they traveled. I can stand at their gravesides. At speaking engagements in Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin, their great-grandsons and great-granddaughters and other relatives come up to say hello. Often they know only a little of what their ancestors did between 1861 and 1865 and I have the wonderful opportunity to share information I have uncovered. The Black Hats left a remarkable record of service and patriotism at a critical time in American history and they deserve to be remembered.

SB: Why did you decide to write *The Iron Brigade in Civil War and Memory*?

LH: I had been thinking about a new and complete history of the Iron Brigade for many years. I was finishing a journalism degree at Marquette University when Alan Nolan was writing his excellent *The Iron Brigade: A Military History*. He published it in 1961 and it was a huge success. I had provided some minor information to him at the time and we became lifelong friends and walked a lot of the battlefields together. It is difficult to grow up in Wisconsin and not be drawn to the story of the Iron Brigade, which included three Wisconsin regiments in addition to one from Michigan and one from Indiana. Over the years, I wrote a couple of books on the Black Hats that covered only a narrow portion of the story and expanded on Nolan's work with information that has come to light since 1961. Alan pretty much ended his book after the Iron Brigade lost its all-Western makeup in 1863, and included only a few pages on the rest of the war. I began thinking seriously about completing the story about five years ago under the persistent badgering of my publisher, Ted Savas. So much new information had become available and I wanted as well to take a long and hard look at the 1864 and 1865 role of the brigade in the closing days of the Civil War.

SB: Let's step back a moment. How did you become interested in the Civil War?

LH: I blame my father. When I was about 12, he brought home an 1864 rifle-musket and cavalry sword he found while helping a neighbor clean out an old shed. I was totally entranced and I began to read everything I could find on the Civil War. I also became interested in shooting small arms and artillery of the era and was soon active in competitive shooting with the North-South Skirmish Association. My team was Company F, the Citizens Corps, 6th Wisconsin of the famous Iron Brigade. I still shoot a little even today and I think being familiar with the weaponry helps you better understand – if even on a small scale – battle and the reality of executing tactics under fire.

SB: You were in the news business most of your life. Did that influence your take on history and the Civil War?

LH: It surely did. I was a reporter for the United Press International (UPI) news wire service for most of my adult life. As a reporter, I am a product of the Vietnam era and I tend to be generally distrustful of official materials. I am not interested in looking at events from the top down. I am interested in looking at events from the ranks up because it is a very different view. A generic report that the Army of the Potomac was "short on supplies" does not match in hard reality an account of a hungry private soldier chasing a cow across a field in an effort to get a canteen full of milk. A professor of mine at Marquette University, Dr. Frank Kliment, who wrote four good books on the Civil War, said reporters always have the first chance to write history. He liked to add with a smile, however, that most reporters got it wrong. I guess what I am doing now is just an extension of my UPI days. When I start writing about a battle or incident from the Civil War, I pretty much let the actual sources take me where they will. I like to say my coverage zone just slipped from the

1960s to the 1860s.

SB: What makes *The Iron Brigade in Civil War and Memory* unique?

LH: First, there is no other book at all like it on the Iron Brigade. And my UPI experience, as I mentioned a moment ago, gives me a different perspective. I like to write about how people are affected by history, both good and bad. And when you do that, and work from the bottom up, these men flesh out into individuals with feelings, thoughts, emotions, families, pain, suffering. They bleed, cry, are footsore, hungry, tired, cold – just like all the rest of us.

SB: You bring them alive...

LH: I try to do that, yes. I want readers to identify with them and think about them when they close the book. I covered several presidents and dozens of political campaigns as well as much of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movement for UPI. It taught me about the complexity of the world around you and how unexpected violence can be, and how difficult it is to deal with it emotionally. One of my first jobs at UPI's Milwaukee bureau was contacting the families of Wisconsin soldiers killed in Vietnam. Each Friday afternoon for two years, when the lists were released, I would call the families to get the details of the lives of their fallen sons and brothers. At first I was horrified at the thought of such an intrusion, but I soon discovered the families were more than willing to talk to me...

SB: Why was that?

LH: I think they needed to have someone recognize the sacrifice of their loved ones and to make sure everyone knew what they were all about before they were killed. I think about that sometimes while writing about some Black Hat killed at Gettysburg or elsewhere. He is obscure to us today. Odds are we don't have his photo and know very little about him. But he was someone's son, father, husband, brother, uncle. Someone knew him back then, and someone grieved when they learned of his fate.

SB: What is it about this study of the Iron Brigade that you think will interest readers who have read your other books on the same unit?

LH: That's a good question and I actually address that in the introduction. I get asked that a lot, too. Where to begin. First, as I noted earlier, no other study goes past Gettysburg in any depth. I think there are something like 150 pages just on 1864 and 1865. All of the attention has been the early part of the war, and especially their stand at Gettysburg. How the survivors reacted and performed in the 1864 and early 1865 fighting is a completely different story of a different kind of courage. The idealistic young men of 1861 are hardened combat veterans fighting a different kind of war. So I think this new book offers a conclusion – a final ending – to the endless interesting and revealing story of the Black Hats.

SB: That sounds interesting. I take it there are several other aspects to your new work...

LH: Yes, there are. Next, I think the book develops the changing understanding of the war by the soldiers and then, long after the fighting, how they dealt with what they saw and how it changed their lives. The question they tried to understand and answer was whether the result of the long war was worth the cost in deaths, suffering, destruction, and loss. It is easy to forget in writing military history the soldiers were real people. I finally had enough material to really root out answers to those questions.

SB: Did they conclude it was worth the terrible cost?

LH: Yes, as a whole I think so, but some of these men really suffered emotionally after the war. I am not sure they were completely convinced.

SB: Does an example jump readily to mind?

LH: Yes. Rufus Dawes. He was an officer, fought through the entire war, and afterward was elected to Congress. When he was leaving Washing-

ton, he wrote a moving letter to his wife about spending days searching through Arlington to find the graves of those who died under his command and as a result of executing his orders. And then he described many of them. Dawes was never wounded. I think he had what we call today "Survivor's Guilt." I think he was really torn up inside. It is not hard to understand why. That story, in much greater detail, is in the book.

SB: What else do you think readers will enjoy about this study?

LH: Over the years, descendants have given me letters, diaries, photos, journals, and such. It was all this new material, plus some wonderful

newspaper articles most historians have ignored, that made this book possible. The book also includes dozens of previously unpublished photos. Taken as a whole, these men finally come alive in a way that was simply impossible to create in the past.

SB: Thank you for your time, we appreciate it.

LH: You're welcome.

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BROWN'S ISLAND EXPLOSION • MARCH 13, 1863

Like the Allegheny Arsenal explosion of September 17, 1862 in which 78 mostly women and young girls perished, the Brown's Island Confederate Laboratory also saw a great loss of life to women and young girls.

The Laboratory was established by Captain Wesley Smith in the early part of 1861 on Brown's Island located in the James River at the base of Seventh Street in Richmond. The mostly female workers, ages twelve to sixty, at peak efficiency, could turn out an average of 1,200 cartridges a day; their hands were small and were well suited to assembling cartridges, fuses, caps and primers for the Confederate army.

There were seventy females working in Department Q on Friday morning, March 13, 1863. Mary Ryan, at the age of eighteen was one of the "older" workers. As Mary attempted to extract black powder from a defective friction primer, a percussion cap became mixed in with the powder creating an explosion. The building housing Department Q would be destroyed.

The *Richmond Examiner* would report on the explosion the following day:

Between eleven and twelve o'clock yesterday morning, a dull, prolonged roar in the direction of Brown's Island startled that portion of the city and directed attention to the island, on which is located the Confederate laboratory works, for the manufacture of percussion caps and gun cartridges...

The apartment in which the explosion occurred, about fifty feet in length and twenty in width, was blown into a complete wreck, the roof lifted off, and the walls dashed out, the ruins falling upon the operatives, and the horrors of fire were threatened to be added to those of the explosion; but the flames were suppressed...

The immediate treatment of the burned consisted in removing their clothing and covering the body thickly with flour and cotton, saturated with oil; chloroform was also administered...

The effect of the explosion did not extend beyond the building in which it occurred, and no interruption of the operations of the Laboratory will result from it. The loss to the Confederate States too, is very inconsiderable.

David L. Burton would write of the terrible suffering experienced by those poor unfortunates:

By Monday after the explosion, additional details of the human agony had emerged. A 15-year old boy had been wedged between a wall and some timbers, and axes were used to free him. Burned horribly and suffering from a broken skull, the boy lived until Wednesday.

And of the fate of Mary Ryan whose actions sparked the explosion:

Mary Ryan suffered with her injuries until the Monday after the explosion. She died at her father's home on Oregon Hill, a residential area within a mile of the laboratory. In the end, the explosion killed 45 of her 70 co-workers.

Yet, the explosion and loss of life would be soon forgotten as the Confederacy sent more men into the field. John Woodcock, the supervisor of Department Q would be the only victim to receive a proper funeral; the rest of the victims would be laid to their rest in unmarked paupers' graves. And the war continued as they lay in their graves, their names, their service to their country and their sacrifice forgotten.

Finally, on September 15, 2001, one hundred and thirty-nine years after the explosion, the forgotten would receive recognition. The Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Virginia Division of the Children of the Confederacy dedicated a monument to the forgotten at Richmond's Oakwood Cemetery.

The monument — a gray granite marker — bears the names and ages of those who perished — forgotten no more.

Though their hands were small and not hardened in battle their service to the Confederacy looms large.

May this stone serve as a perpetual memorial to the dedication and sacrifice of these forgotten and unsung victims.

Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for March 7, 2013

Mail your reservations by Monday, March 4, 2013, to:
Paul Eilbes
1809 Washington Ave.
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

ALSO, call in reservations to:
(262) 376-0568
peilbes@gmail.com

Enclosed is \$ _____ (meal price \$25.00 per person) for _____ reservations for March 7, 2013, 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 _____

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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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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.



In March 1954, T. Harry Williams spoke about "The Pattern of a Biographer: Douglas Southall Freeman & His Life of Robert E. Lee."

Clyde Walton Jr. talked about "Battles By the Book" at the March 1964 meeting.

"The Story of John Y. Buell" was the subject of Richard D. Mudd's presentation in March 1974.

Col. Roy K. Flint was our featured speaker in March 1984. The topic that night was "Eight Minutes to Live: Defeat of the Federal Assault at Cold Harbor, June 3, 1864."

"Loyal Afro-Virginians" was presented by Ervin L. Jordan Jr. at the March 1994 Round Table meeting.

At the March 2004 meeting our guest speaker was Thomas F. Schwartz. The topic that evening was "Crazy Folks...Why I Must Only Take My Chances: Death Threats To Lincoln."

At last year's March 2012 meeting the Round Table welcomed A. Wilson Greene who talked to us about "The Bermuda Hundred Campaign."