



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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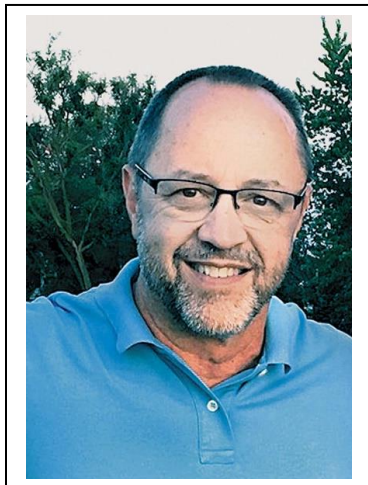
799th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Ron Kirkwood presents:**

## ““Too Much for Human Endurance”: The George Spangler Farm Hospitals and the Battle of Gettysburg”

**Zoom Meeting. Time: Apr. 9, 2021 07:30 PM CST**

**Zoom Meeting ID: 835 0660 5547. Passcode: 834955**



Ron Kirkwood is the author of *Too Much for Human Endurance: The George Spangler Farm Hospitals and the Battle of Gettysburg*, which was published by Savas Beatie LLC in hardcover in June 2019. The book went into its second hardcover printing in October 2019 and was then published in paperback and audio in February 2021.

Kirkwood argues in “Too Much for Human Endurance” that the George Spangler farm was the most important farm in the Battle of Gettysburg, revealing factors that have been overlooked for generations. The book and his presentation also offer newly found information about Confederate Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Armistead’s time at Spangler, the Spanglers, the Artillery Reserve and stories of the suffering and heroism of the surgeons, nurses, wounded and mortally wounded at the two hospitals on the Spanglers’ land. The names, wound and treatment of more than 1,400 men at the XI Corps hospital are listed in the book.

Kirkwood is retired after a 40-year career as an editor and writer in newspapers and magazines including USA TODAY, the Baltimore Sun, the Harrisburg Patriot-News and the York (PA) Daily Record. He edited national magazines for USA TODAY Sports and was National Football League editor for USA TODAY Sports Weekly. He won numerous state, regional and national writing and editing awards during his career and managed the 32-person copy desk in Harrisburg when the newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize in 2012. Kirkwood is a Michigan native and graduate of Central Michigan University, where he has returned as guest speaker to journalism classes as part of the school’s Hearst Visiting Professionals series.

Kirkwood has been a Gettysburg Foundation guide at the George Spangler Farm Civil War Field Hospital Site since it opened in 2013. He lives in York not far from the battlefield with his wife of 44 years, Barbara.

## **Battlefield Preservation**

### **The Opportunity**

Thanks to a combination of anticipated federal grants and gifts from our great local partners at the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, we have already secured more than 88% of the funds needed to pay for these land transactions totaling \$1.2 million.

This means that any gift that you give today will be multiplied by an \$8.90-to-\$1 match! We just need to raise \$144,671 to complete these transactions.

With your gift of \$64 or more today, you will receive your own special copy of *Hell Itself: The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-7, 1864* written by historian Chris Mackowski. This book details the Battle of the Wilderness and its impact on the Overland Campaign and is limited to the first 1,864 contributors.

### **The Background**

Each of these three battlefields witnessed a consequential 1864 battle and played a role in General U.S. Grant's grand strategy for the final, full year of the war.

In addition, 39 of these irreplaceable 95 acres are twice-hallowed ground. The land you can save today at First Deep Bottom also saw action in the 1862 Battle of Glendale, doubling the importance of saving this hallowed ground.

Let's take each of the battles in turn, beginning with the Battle of Mansfield, Louisiana...

### **Mansfield Battlefield**

In the spring of 1864, Union forces launched an offensive known as the Red River Campaign. Its objective was to capture Louisiana's Confederate capital at Shreveport and then open the gateway for Federal troops to enter Texas.

Union forces under General Nathaniel P. Banks made their way north from New Orleans, arriving at Mansfield, also called Sabine's Crossroads. However, between Banks' army and the Union target was a Confederate force of about half the size, led by General Richard Taylor.

Banks's men made their way to the top of a slope called Honeycutt Hill only to discover the entirety of Taylor's force arrayed in a line of battle in front of them. Knowing they would need reinforcements to advance, Banks sent back for more troops. Several hours of heavy skirmishing followed until late in the afternoon and impatient to go on the offensive, Taylor attacked.

The Federals sent volley after volley into the advancing Confederates, but the wave of Southerners continued to rush Honeycutt Hill. The Federal soldiers desperately awaited reinforcements, but a disorganized tangle of troops and wagons from their own 20-mile-long supply lines delayed the arrival of any relief.

The Union troops atop Honeycutt Hill found themselves outflanked and nearly surrounded by Taylor's troops. The Union line crumbled, opening the way for Taylor to push the Federals off the hill, the battlefield, ultimately reversing the course of the entire campaign.

For those most heavily engaged on both sides of the Battle of Mansfield, the casualties were staggering — in General Alfred Mouton's Confederate brigade, nearly every regimental commander was killed. One Union Thirteenth Corps division lost 43 percent of its men, killed, wounded and captured.

(from The American Battlefield Trust)

## **March Meeting**

**By Mark Matranga**

The Civil War Round Table was honored at its 800<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on March 12, 2021, by our Nevins-Freeman award winner, Greg Biggs, who provided a trenchant analysis of the intricate logistics involved in the Atlanta Campaign. General Sherman learned how vital logistics were while campaigning with Grant during the campaign to open the Mississippi. Applying the maxim of Sun Tzu that without its equipment, without base stores, an army is lost, Sherman developed a centralized administration for delivering both ordnance and quartermaster stores to an advancing front during the summer of 1864.

Essential to Sherman's task was control of the railroad network from major hubs where supplies were massed and forwarded southward. This required assignment of troops to patrol, guard, and repair the rails, bridges, and tunnels which were exposed to cavalry and guerilla raids; towns along the railroads were also chokepoints where the supply line was vulnerable. Major depots were established at St. Louis, Louisville and Cincinnati, and at Nashville, and ultimately forwarded to Chattanooga. As the front inched southward, the rail line eventually stretched some 400 miles, the last 100 of which were a single line.

Biggs elaborated on the needs of the army: the rations and ammunition each infantryman and artilleryman required, as well as the supplies the cavalry and their mounts needed; he also outlined the vast amount of forage needed for horses and mules and the wagons needed to transport ordnance and supplies. As an example, Biggs cited the length of Rosecrans' train during the Tullahoma Campaign: 35 miles, with each wagon carrying 2,500 pounds of supplies, including forage. Sherman reduced the number of wagons for Atlanta by reallocating supplies but still used 5,180 wagons, 32,600 mules and 26,00 horses. He offloaded supplies to wagons

directly from the nearest railhead so that troops could be readily supplied without having to carry excess food and ammunition.

Sherman faced certain problems in moving material along the rails: the need to feed and supply an army group of 115,000 with 60,000 animals; managing substandard railbeds; and lack of rolling stock and differences in gauges in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia. Also, low water levels on the Cumberland limited transport over water to Nashville. The first railroad moving south, the single track Louisville & Nashville leading to his advance depot at Nashville, Sherman considered “the delicate part of my game.”

Moving south from Nashville, the Nashville & Chattanooga terminated at Stevenson, Alabama, where the Memphis & Charleston shuttled supplies to Chattanooga; the Tennessee & Alabama took empty cars from its terminus in Decatur, Alabama, back to Nashville to complete the circuit. Sherman also used the Nashville & Northwestern which connected the Nashville depot with the Tennessee River, giving the union an alternative route should the line north be interrupted. Trains loaded with 10 tons of freight steamed out of Nashville daily. Steamboats moved from Louisville down the Ohio and Cumberland rivers to Nashville. Other boats made their way via the Tennessee from Decatur and Bridgeport, Alabama, to Chattanooga.

Sherman’s chief subordinates who implemented his plan were: Lt. Col. James L. Donaldson, Chief Quartermaster, Department of the Cumberland, who oversaw 13,000 workers at the Nashville depot, Col. Lewis B. Parsons, Chief of Railroad and Western River Transportation, who handled steamboat arrivals and departures, and Brig. Gen. Robert Allen, Chief Quartermaster, Military Division of the Mississippi, whose Louisville depot stocked 10 million rations and shipped 300,000 a day. Sherman made strict demands on these men, telling Donaldson he would “eat your mules up” if his army was not kept supplied. He informed the Christian Commission that “crackers and oats are more necessary to my army than any moral or religious agency.” He directed that no cattle, returning units or private freight ride trains south of Nashville.

The depot at Chattanooga was stockpiled with food, ammunition, and forage for 70 days; subsidiary depots were created on the march: Dalton, Resaca and points south to Vinings Station on the Chattahoochee. Sherman set up repair shops and rebuilt the railroads and bridges behind him. Leading this effort was Col. Daniel C. McCallum, USMRR. Biggs also cited Adna Anderson, Superintendent of Transportation, James Guthrie, President of the Louisville & Nashville RR, Col. William W. Wright, Director of Construction Corps, Col. Amos Beckwith, and Herman Haupt who commanded the military railroads as making major contributions to making the “Construction Corps, Col. Amos Beckwith, Chief Commissary, Lt. Col. L.C. Easton, Sherman’s Chief Quartermaster, and Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs.

Despite problems during the campaign, especially when he left the railroad for the “Hellhole” near Dallas, Sherman had won the campaign before it began. Although “uneasy with a railroad

that takes a whole army to guard,” he nonetheless applied the doctrine that ‘good logistics is combat power.’ Knowing that the “great question” of the campaign was one of supplies, he harnessed the transportation and supply systems, keeping his army moving and engaged throughout the campaign. In so doing, Sherman made himself a master of Civil War logistics.



## **BULLETIN BOARD**

The **Kenosha Civil War Museum** is putting on programs which can be watched on facebook:

“Company K, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters”

**Friday, April 9, at Noon. Presenter: Eric Hemenway**

“Lincolnonics: Why Lincoln Still Rocks the Global Conversation on Progress”

**Wednesday, April 14, at 3pm. Presenter: John Wasik**

For more on programs at the museum, visit <https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/events/>

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The **Congress of Civil War Round Tables** is sponsoring a series of virtual Civil War Lectures by some of the nation’s leading historians.

Visit <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html> to view the complete schedule and register

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**Rob Girardi** has the following presentations in April:

April 13, at the Loudon County CWRT (VA, on “Railroad Defense in the Atlanta Campaign” (zoom)

April 14, for the CWRT Congress, on “The Murder of Major General Bull Nelson” (zoom)

April 17, at the Old Glory SUV (Springfield), on “Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier”

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On April 17<sup>th</sup> **Bruce Allardice** will present “Baseball and the Civil War” at the Vintage Base Ball Association Convention, via zoom.

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On April 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 CST the **Abraham Lincoln Bookshop**’s “House Divided” series will feature an interview with author Karen Cox, discussing her book *No Common Ground*. On April 13<sup>th</sup> Ed Steers will discuss latest book. *Getting Right with Lincoln*. The event also starts at 3:30 p.m. CST. Visit <https://alincolinbookshop.com/> for more.

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### **More Upcoming Local Civil War Events**

Due to government-ordered shutdowns, CWRT events are being cancelled or going online on an ad hoc basis. Contact the sponsoring organization for up to date details. Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT’s website for additional coming events.

Apr. 2nd, Northern Illinois CWRT: Pam Toler on "Nursing in the Civil War"

Apr 7th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Ray Wilson on "International Relations During the Civil War"

Apr. 9th, **Chicago CWRT**: Ron Kirkwood on "Too Much for Human Endurance: The Spangler Farm Hospitals"

Apr. 10th, Two Old Goats in Cedar Lake: Father Bob Miller on "The Original Fighting Irish: Notre Dame's Civil War Chaplains"

Apr. 16th, Salt Creek CWRT: Steve Alban on "Benjamin Franklin Butler"

Apr. 20th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: David Dixon on "General Auguat Willich"

Apr 22nd, South Suburban CWRT: Doug Dammann on "Kenosha Civil War Museum"

### **Future Chicago CWRT Meetings (all Zoom until further notice)**

May 14th: Michael Hardy on *General Lee's Immortals*

June 11<sup>th</sup>: Wil Greene on *Petersburg*

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