

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Volume LXXXIII, Number 7

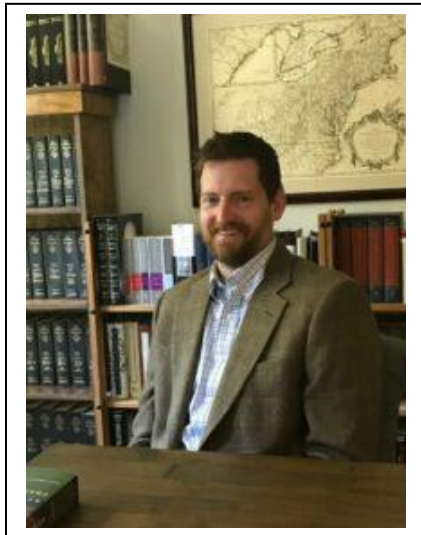
Chicago, Illinois

March 2024

825th REGULAR MEETING, Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Chris Bryan on "The Union XII Corps"

**Live/Zoom Meeting. Time: Mar. 8th, 2024, 07:30 PM CST.  
Zoom Option ID 845 3227 1496; No Passcode needed**



The Union XII Corps formed in June 1862. The corps, which joined the Army of the Potomac only a week before Antietam was small, numbering just over 7,600 men. Easily overlooked, Army of the Potomac leadership and historians since have largely glossed over this corps' contribution at Antietam. Nevertheless, this small corps ended Confederate attacks into the Miller Cornfield and East Woods, successfully defended the Dunker Church Plateau from Confederate assaults, and captured the West Woods, which had been the goal on the Federal right all morning. Chris Bryan will provide a brief overview of the period from the Battle of Cedar Mountain until the corps' entry into Maryland, including its condition resulting from this period. The

talk will then examine the XII Corps' participation in the Maryland Campaign and its fighting at Antietam, including some new findings discovered through recent archival research.

M. Chris Bryan's *Cedar Mountain to Antietam: A Civil War Campaign History of the Union XII Corps, July –September 1862* begins with the formation of this often-luckless command as the II Corps in Maj. Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia on June 26, 1862. Bryan explains in meticulous detail how the corps endured a bloody and demoralizing loss after coming within a whisker of defeating Maj. Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson at Cedar

Mountain on August 9; suffered through the hardships of Pope's campaign before and after the Battle of Second Manassas; and triumphed after entering Maryland and joining the reorganized Army of the Potomac. The men of this small corps earned a solid reputation in the Army of the Potomac at Antietam that would only grow during the battles of 1863.

Chris Bryan is a native of Greencastle, Pennsylvania. He earned a B.S. in History from the United States Naval Academy, an M.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John's College, Annapolis, and a Masters in Historic Preservation from the University of Maryland, College Park, with a focus on architectural investigations of Chesapeake region antebellum domestic and agricultural outbuildings. The former Naval Aviator works as a project manager in Southern Maryland. *Cedar Mountain to Antietam* is his first book.

---

## Battlefield Preservation

For the past four years, we have been waging a long and difficult battle to achieve one of our greatest victories — preserving a nearly one-square-mile piece of sacred battlefield in our **Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign**.

As you may know, this land in Virginia has deep **history**. The overlapping ground on which both the battles of Gaines' Mill and Cold Harbor were fought is **one of the most hallowed battlefields in America**.

Fortunately, we are closer than ever to permanently preserving this double battlefield land... *But I have some unfortunate news.*

When we launched this phase of the *Saved Forever* campaign back in September, we announced the fourth and LARGEST tract in our historic Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor campaign — and that we needed to raise \$506,047.

**As of today, we have raised just over \$405,000, which means we are short of our goal by over \$100,000.**

Trust me, I would much rather write and tell you we have achieved our goals than have to ask for your help once again. But, in this case, there is no other choice. That's why I'm reaching out to you urgently.

**Please help raise the remaining funds needed today so that we can secure this critical tract at Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor.**

Your generosity will be multiplied by a factor of \$2.14 to \$1, more than doubling your impact, thanks to some very generous major donors and expected federal and state grants.

As a lover of history, you know there have been times when commanders believed they had the battle won, only to be thwarted in the final hours. *We cannot let that happen here.*

If you haven't had a chance yet to give to this campaign, please do so today. This would be the **perfect time to donate** and see us through to victory!

'Til the battle is won,  
American Battlefield Trust

---

## February Presentation

By Mark Matranga

At its 824<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting on February 9, 2024, The Civil War Round Table featured Carolyn Ivanoff, presenting “We fought at Gettysburg: The 17<sup>th</sup> Connecticut.” Ivanoff introduced the men of this Fairfield County regiment, their personal relationships, and the resulting death and hardships they faced after the shock of battle on July 1, 1863.

Ivanoff zeroed in on the condition of the Army of the Potomac at the time it marched to Gettysburg. General Meade assumed command of the army on June 30 and sent all supply trains to the rear. Major Letterman, Medical Director, saw almost all medical supplies sent 20 miles to the rear. Thus, necessary first aid and surgical equipment were not immediately at hand to care for the wounded once battle commenced.

Once at Gettysburg, the XI Corps was positioned outside of town here it was subjected to assault from both flanks. The 17<sup>th</sup> Connecticut's brigade was pushed out to the rise known as Barlow's Knoll where it was badly outnumbered – over three to one – and sustained considerable casualties. Its commander, Colonel Moore, was killed; Lt. Col. Fowler was decapitated by shot. Ivanoff quite convincingly argued that the Chancellorsville “slander” was not deserved by these troops.

After July 1, wounded were taken to the Almshouse. Other hospitals were located at the Dutch Reformed Church, Brenner Farm, High Street School, and the Spangler Farm. But every public building as well as virtually every home and farm became places for the wounded. As the battle continued the Spangler Farm located between the Taneytown Road and the Baltimore Pike became the collection point from where the wounded were transported to hospitals in Washington, Baltimore, and elsewhere. Gettysburg, a town of some 2,400 inhabitants, housed 24,000 wounded in the wake of the battle.

Ivanoff described the execrable conditions of the Gettysburg battlefield landscape after the armies left. It had begun to rain on July 4, soaking the fields and causing hastily buried bodies

and body parts to surface. Animal carcasses littered the fields as well. Rotting flesh produced a stench noticeable for miles around.

Ivanoff then told the stories of soldiers of the 17<sup>th</sup>, some of whom tended their friends and fellow soldiers as nurses. Pvt. Leo Dickens, Co. C, was one who worked at the Dutch Reformed Church and Spangler Farm, as was James Middlebrook, Co. D, a soldier-nurse at the Spangler Farm. She related the case of James Roach, Co. E, who was a good soldier but was no longer of sound mind after Chancellorsville. It took an act of Congress for Roach to receive his pension. Then there was Pvt. John Collins, who tended to Dr. Hubbard, Medical Inspector, XI Corps, after the doctor's horse fell on him. After retreating to Cemetery Hill when the doctor noted that Collins had what appeared to be a chest wound. Miraculously for Collins, the bullet was stopped by his bible.

The case of Corporal Aaron Lee, Co. G, was interesting. His leg wound treated by Confederate doctors and later freed, he was treated at Spangler Farm and then sent to Philadelphia. Despite gangrene having set in, he refused to die and recuperated and sent to Bridgeport, Connecticut, to convalesce. He returned to the regiment in June 1864. J. Henry Blakeman, Co. D, placed at High Street, saw his best friend die and nursed others at Spangler Farm; he later held every public office in Stratford, Connecticut. Pvt. Justin Silliam, Co. H, watched Pickett's Charge from the cupola of High Street School.

Pvt. Henry Waite, Co. K, enlisted to escape an abusive father. A soldier-nurse at the German Reformed Church, he experimented with x-ray technology and invented a portable x-ray machine used in WWI. Rufus Warren, Co. C, was mortally wounded, dying after his leg was amputated. In what was a typical case, his uncle came from Connecticut to carry his body home. Corporal Alva Wilcox, Co. D, was mortally wounded from a sucking chest wound on July 2 on East Cemetery Hill. Warren died in the arms of his best friend, another sad but typical occurrence on Civil War battlefields.

Ivanoff's war is a very personal one, and well told. She also brought to the fore the role of civil war surgeons who may not have had any experience pre-war but who transformed medicine through their work. She pointed out that not only was Major Letterman an innovator – bringing the concept of triage into being – he was insistent on having only the best doctors approved for surgery. These men led the way for surgery to become a practical treatment for all Americans.



## **BULLETIN BOARD**

*Our in-person meetings are currently held at:*

### **Holiday Inn Oakbrook**

350 W 22nd St., Oakbrook Terrace

*Parking at the Holiday Inn is FREE*

Dinner \$40.00 Members and Non- Members

Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30

Presentation only is \$10 per person.

The **Kenosha Civil War Museum** is putting on the following in-person/virtual programs:

On Saturday, Mar. 23, from 10-4, the reenactor unit "The First Michigan Engineers" will discuss the role of engineers in the war.

On Friday Mar. 8<sup>th</sup> at noon, Terry Arliskas will present "The Women Founders and History of the Milwaukee Soldiers Home."

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

---

Carthage College will hold their Third Annual **Abraham Lincoln symposium** April 25-26.

---

**Bruce Allardice** will present "Lincoln as War Leader" March 16 at the Lake County Historical and Genealogical Society, Zion-Benton Library, and "Before the Chicago Cubs: Baseball Comes to the Windy City" March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Thornton IL Historical Society.

---

**Rob Girardi** is speaking March 5 at the Patty Turner Center on "The Changing Memory of the Civil War" and March 26 at the Woodstock Public Library on "The Civil War Generals"

---

## More Upcoming Local Civil War Events

Check the **Announcements** section of the CWRT's website for additional coming events.

Mar. 1st, Northern Illinois CWRT: Steve Alban on "The Election of 1860: How Lincoln Really Got Elected"

Mar. 4th, Rock Valley CWRT: Gordon Dammann on "Civil War Medicine"

Mar. 6th, Kankakee Valley CWRT: Gordon Ramsey on "The Music of the Civil War"

Mar. 7th, Milwaukee CWRT: Chris Bryan on "The Union XII Corps"

Mar. 10th, Northwest Indiana CWRT: Bruce Allardice on "Baseball During the Civil War"

Mar. 12th, McHenry County CWRT: Charlie Banks on "Confederate Railroads"

Mar. 12<sup>th</sup>, Southwest Michigan CWRT: Les Fowler on "The Modern Battle for Little Round Top"

Mar. 16th, Salt Creek CWRT: Mary Abroe on "Civil War Centennial: Rhetoric, Reality, and the Bounds of Selective Memory"

Mar. 19th, Lincoln-Davis CWRT: Don Sender on "Cruise of the Confederate Raider Shenandoah"

Mar. 28th, South Suburban CWRT: Dennis Doyle on "11th New York Light Artillery at Gettysburg"

---

## Future Chicago CWRT Meetings

**April 12th:** Will Greene on "The Cracker Line and Chattanooga"

**May 10th:** Lynn and Julianne Herman on "The Allegheny Arsenal Explosion"

**June 14th:** Tim Smith (Nevins-Freeman Award) on "Vicksburg"

---

The **Abraham Lincoln Book Shop's** facebook page airs "Take a Break with History", every first and third Friday of the month at 1 pm CST.

Their "House Divided" series will, on Mar. 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 CST, feature Jonathan White discussing his two new books, *Shipwrecked: A True Civil War Story of Mutinies, Jailbreaks, Blockade-Running and the Slave Trade* and *My Day With Abe Lincoln*.

For more, visit <https://alincolnbookshop.com/>

---

Our CWRT recently lost two people who were instrumental in the organization—**Hal Ardell** and **Muriel Underwood**. Hal was the longtime photos guru of the CWRT. Muriel was Ralph Newman's secretary, and onetime editor of this newsletter. Both grand people who we had the privilege of knowing.

---

**Reminder**—There's still a few seats left for the **Battlefield Tour of Gettysburg**, April 24-28<sup>th</sup>! Visit <https://chicagocwrt.org/battletour.html> for more!

---

The **CWRT's Nominating Committee** (all past presidents) will meet March 8 prior to the regular meeting, to discuss nominations for CWRT officers for next year. Holiday Inn's Bar Louie at 5 p.m.

---

The **Central Coast Civil War Conference**, March 1-3, 2024 in Monterey, CA, features a great list of presenters. Visit <https://whtours.org/1864-to-wars-end.html>