

The Outpost

**The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table
Vol. LVIX No. 4 December 2020**



535th Regular Meeting

DATE: Friday, December 18, 2020
PLACE: Confines of your own home.
Due to Covid restrictions the meeting will be via zoom
TIME: 7:30 p.m.
TOPIC: "The First Michigan Engineers"
SPEAKER: Brian Conroy

From the very beginning of the United States, the Corps of Engineers in the military was quite small, and when the Civil War started, the need for trained engineers to guide and build for the army was known by those officers throughout the military. Volunteers engineer regiments began emerging, and the Wolverine state brought forth three engineer regiments, of which the 1st Michigan Engineers and Mechanics were the only one to last to the end of the war. The regiments were stationed mainly throughout Tennessee and Kentucky, and eventually travelled with General Sherman to Atlanta, then on the March to the Sea, and up through the Carolinas, culminating their service in the Grand March in Washington, D.C. Today, this regiment of volunteers is represented by a diverse group that keeps the memory of their deeds alive.

Brian Conroy received his Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of South Florida, and currently works full time as a Records Assistant for the DuPage County State's Attorney Office. He also works for the Joliet Area Historical Museum as a Museum Assistant and Guide at the Old Joliet Prison, and volunteers as Vice President and Living History Coordinator with the Will County Historical Museum and Research Center in Lockport, Illinois. He is also on various boards for the Irish American Society of County Will, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War General Philip H. Sheridan Camp #2, and A River Thru History Rendezvous. He is also a member and attends the South Suburban CWRT, Lincoln Davis CWRT, and is a board member for Salt Creek CWRT.

Brian has been a Civil War reenactor and living historian since 2000, portraying fur trader and Chicago politician and businessman Gurdon Hubbard, 1760s Eastern Market Hunter, and is presently First Sergeant of the modern-day group portraying the 1st Michigan Engineers and Mechanics, Company E.

NOVEMBER MEETING UPDATE BY ART FOLEY

For November's zoom session we were treated to Rob Girardi's presentation, "Abraham Lincoln and the Common Soldier". President Lincoln's policies taken to preserve the Union would be borne by the soldiers that he sent into harms way. Lincoln understood and was weighed down by this immense responsibility. Appreciative and empathetic towards the common soldier, Lincoln went to lengths displaying an understanding of their importance. The President made a practice of meeting the men in the ranks to know their views and needs. His concern cultivated a reciprocal appreciation from the rank and file as expressed in terms of endearment such as referring to him as "Father Abraham". The common soldier understood that Lincoln had to make the hard decisions of war, but would retain a regard to their welfare. Lincoln habituated the camps, hospitals, wherever there were troops, speaking with common soldiers, gauging morale and inspecting the army.

With scant previous experience, Lincoln versed himself in military matters. He understood the necessity to properly assess military issues in his stewardship role. He learned the lessons well, as demonstrated by his energies expended directing troops in the retaking of the Norfolk naval yard and other nearby sites in 1862. Additionally, he participated in inspecting new weapon designs and logistical items in order to provide any possible edge to the soldier's and sailor's ability to prosecute the fight.

Rob cited many instances of veteran's remembrances of Lincoln's speaking to the troops especially to men leaving for the field of battle. He expressed understanding of their role and his appreciation. Many a cited memory conveyed those individuals deep regard towards his empathy. Providing instances of Lincoln's humanity in letters he wrote to the bereaved, mercy he displayed to men facing capital sentences, and a willingness to venture to the battlefield to meet with the troops. The common man knew Abraham Lincoln cared and they returned the favor by supporting his reelection in 1864. Quoting a Sanitary Fair speech he gave, the President said, "The highest merit, then, is due the soldier". This sentiment returns often in the Presidents public utterances such as the Gettysburg Address, and the Second Inaugural .

After his passing, this shared affection grew into the reverence on display whenever the name of Lincoln is uttered. In the cinema, films featuring Lincoln surround him with the aura of greatness and beneficial stewardship.

Thank you Mr. Girardi for your continued contributions enlightening and uplifting our sessions. Huzzah!

VACANT CHAIR

Longtime member Sam Blackwell passed away December 3rd from a non Covid related infection. Sam gave several cavalry related presentations and was a familiar face at the Civil War Shows. He authored In the First Line of Battle: The 12th Illinois Cavalry. A longtime friend said Sam felt his affiliation with Civil War Round Tables enriched his life.

ZOOM LINK MEETING INFORMATION WILL BE SENT IN A SEPARATE EMAIL OR POSTED ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE.

DECEMBER 2020 PRESERVATION REPORT BY BRIAN CONROY

As we head into the end of December, it's obvious that the majority of our past preservation reports have focused on the American Battlefield Trust. But there are other organizations out there that focus on preserving Civil War battlefields, and that is what will be focused on in this edition. Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) is a non-profit organization founded in 1996 dedicated to the preservation of endangered, historic battlefields in Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Brandy Station areas of Virginia. Incorporated in 1996, they have helped preserve over 1,350 acres of historic battlefield terrain where many gave their last full measure. In addition to purchasing land, their mission includes advocacy for battlefield preservation as they work constructively with local governments in the spirit of mutual benefit and cooperation. They have cultivated positive partnerships with landowners, preservation organizations, and local governments over the years, and remain a proactive organization, with continuing battlefield preservation projects and negotiations. CVBT focuses on, and is committed to, a mission of battlefield preservation to save important land to not only increase our ability to study our nation's past, but create much needed Green Space in our ever-disappearing natural landscape.

They have also produced a series of YouTube videos that highlight their preservation successes, actors portraying certain characters from the Civil War including Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, Youth Day service programs from previous years, and fundraising opportunities that would go towards preservation opportunities. As many do, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust also puts on an annual conference every spring focusing on their preservation efforts, with 2021 marking 25 years of ongoing battlefield preservation through purchasing land and advocacy for battlefield preservation. The focus of this conference will begin with the how the Battle of Salem Church during the Chancellorsville Campaign began the preservation movement in Central Virginia, and the battle of Willis Hill in Fredericksburg became the first victory for the newly formed CVBT. In addition, the conference will also provide walking tour opportunities along sites at the Battle of Chancellorsville, and keynote speaker historian and author A. Wilson Greene will join us to share a special presentation, reflecting on the battlefield preservation's past and future.

If you wish to know more about the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, please visit them at www.cvbt.org

ALL FOR THE UNION

Membership renewals are due in January. Due to Covid restrictions a new meeting location might be needed. Alternative options are being considered. Membership support is appreciated and needed. A Membership Renewal form is included with this newsletter.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

Check with the organization sponsoring the program for meeting status

December 15, 2020

Lincoln/Davis CWRT will feature Kurt Carlson presenting “Patrick Cleburne”
Country House Restaurant, Alsip, IL

December 17, 2020

South Suburban CWRT will feature their Holiday Party
South Suburban CWRT on Facebook (ZOOM MEETING)

January 6, 2021

Northern Illinois CWRT will feature Doug Dammann presenting “The 1st Wisconsin”
www.northernilcwrt.org (ZOOM MEETING)

January 8, 2021

Chicago CWRT will feature Jennifer Murray presenting “General George Meade”
www.chicagocwrt.org (ZOOM MEETING)

The Civil War Round Table Congress is sponsoring a series of virtual Civil War Lectures.

To view the schedule visit: <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/lectures.html>

The Kenosha Civil War Museum is also sponsoring virtual programs.

To view the schedule visit: <https://museum.kenosha.org/civilwar/events>

FUTURE SALT CREEK CWRT MEETINGS

Check us out on Facebook and at saltcreekcwrt.org

January 15, 2021

Art Foley will present “The Battle of Honey Springs”

February 19, 2021

Dennis Doyle will present “Illinois Regiments at Gettysburg”

THE SALT CREEK CWRT

President: Cindy Heckler

Vice-President: Rick Zarr

Secretary-Treasurer: Jan Rasmussen

Board Members: Chuck Kurtz, Mike Miller, Sharon Maher, Brian Conroy, Nancy Fritz

Historian: Cindy Intravartolo

Newsletter Staff: Jennie Warner, Art Foley, Brian Conroy & Jan Rasmussen

Facebook and Website Editor: Brian Conroy