

# THE CHARGER



## The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

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April 2024

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**SPEAKER** – Jon-Eric Golit, an archivist and records manager in Wheeling, is also co-author of *John Brown's Raid: Harper's Ferry and the Coming of the Civil War, October 16-18, 1859*



**LOCATION:** The Holiday Inn  
Independence at 6001  
Rockside Road,  
Independence, Ohio 44131,  
off US Interstate 77

**TIME:** Social Hour at 6:00  
PM and Presentation at 7:00 PM

**For reservations email:**

[ccwrtreserve@gmail.com](mailto:ccwrtreserve@gmail.com). To ensure a dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, April 2, 2024

**Website:**

<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

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**MEETING** – April 10, 2024

**PROGRAM** – “Hardships & Dangers Will Bind Men as Brothers:” The Ohio National Guard in 1864

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## ***President's Message***

### **Fellow Roundtable Members:**

One of the perks of being the President of the Roundtable is that you get to put the program together for the year. This may sound like a daunting task at first, but it is amazing how easy it becomes once you get started. Especially when you consider the talent within our organization. Some members volunteer to give presentations, others don't hesitate when asked if they will be a presenter. Thanks to Mel Maurer, William Vodrey, Mike Dory and Dennis Keating plus our Annual Dicks Crews Memorial Debate, five of the nine months were quickly filled. Throw in a visit to Northeast Ohio from General Grant and anyone can do this job. You are two thirds of the way through having a program for the year and a theme starts peeking through which for me was "Union Leaders and Ohio in the Civil War". All you have to do now is find three more presentations on topics associated with the theme, but how do you do that?

The answer is you go to the Emerging Civil War speakers' site which provides a brochure of speakers and a variety of topics upon which they can present. This was the source of the last three presenters to fill out my program year. Derek Maxfield gave an excellent presentation on William Tecumseh Sherman who ticked both theme boxes as a Union leader from Ohio, (Derek will be back again next year to speak about the Union prisoner of war camp in Elmira, New York.). Dan Welch was next in the line-up, but he unfortunately had to cancel due to a work

conflict. Fortunately, Dan was able to help us get his friend Dan Masters to fill in last month and the program proceeded without a hitch.

This month will be the third and final Emerging Civil War speaker, Jon-Erik Gilot. His presentation is "Hardships & Dangers Will Bind Men as Brothers": The Ohio National Guard in 1864. This presentation focuses on the Ohio National Guard battalions that were called up for one hundred days service in the summer of 1864 (The title Ohio National Guard was first used in 1864 when Governor Brough organized forty-one regiments for the defense of Washington.). While these troops were to be used for duty behind the lines – guarding bridges, railroads, blockhouses, forts and prisons, thereby freeing up veteran regiments for front-line duty – many were instead thrown into battle in both the eastern and western theaters. The talk follows two National Guard regiments raised in neighboring counties and compares their vastly different experiences during their terms of service, and how history has remembered (or forgotten) the wartime contributions of the Ohio National Guard.

This presentation caught my eye because I was a member of the Ohio Army National Guard for eleven and a half years, of which I served full-time for about seven years. I served as the battalion training officer for the 1/148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in Lima, Ohio for a year and then as the battalion training officer for the 1/136<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion in Columbus, Ohio. I remember the battle streamers that were attached to the unit standard of the 1/148<sup>th</sup> Infantry which included Antietam,

Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and Petersburg, as well as Buena Vista from the Mexican War and battle streamers from both WWI and WWII. The 1/136<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery had similar battle streamers. As I look now at their current history, they have also added streamers for the War on Terrorism with service in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

The 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and the 136<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment were created as part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in 1917 with the “Modern Division” reorganization that took place prior to WWI. The 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry draws its lineage back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry and the 136<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery’s lineage goes back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Ohio Light Artillery. Just after I left the National Guard, the 136<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery was consolidated with the 134<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (also a unit in the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division), whose lineage goes back to the Cleveland Grays in 1839, and was renamed the 1/134<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. My son served in this unit for six years.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was the Ohio National Guard division that served in both WWI and WWII and was known as the “Buckeye Division”. Today, its lineage is continued through the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team, with battalions from Ohio, Michigan, and South Carolina.



*37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (“Buckeye Division”) Shoulder Insignia*



*37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team (“Buckeye Brigade”) Shoulder Insignia*

If you visit Woodland Cemetery, you will find a monument to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry. This unit was the predecessor to the 145<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment which was also part of the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and fought in WWI and WWII. Companies A and C, 1-145<sup>th</sup> Infantry and Troop G of the 2-107<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry were the Ohio National Guard units at Kent State University on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1970, when the tragic shootings occurred. In 1974 the 1/145<sup>th</sup> Infantry became the 1/145<sup>th</sup> Armor and was consolidated with the 107<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment which was the major Ohio National Guard unit for northeast Ohio at the time. As recently as January 2019 the 1/145<sup>th</sup> Armor was attached to the 30<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team for deployment to the middle east in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The extension of the Civil War history that we so passionately study to our more recent and current history has always been an interest of mine. I hope you enjoyed this brief look into the Ohio National Guard.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks,

Bob Pence

## ***The Editor's Desk***



Apple TV+ is currently running a miniseries, “Manhunt,” based loosely on the events surrounding the Lincoln assassination and the Federal government’s search for John Wilkes Booth and his fellow conspirators. Daniel Day Lewis was at first considered for the role of Booth, but the idea was dropped since Lewis had played Abraham Lincoln in an earlier film. The cast that has been chosen, however, is a strong one and adequate for the task of presenting a TV mini-series on the subject.

Anthony Boyle, who is also currently appearing in the Apple TV+ production of “Masters of the Air,” does a good job portraying Booth. Tobias Menzies (“Game of Thrones” and “The Crown”) presents Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, as a more sympathetic character than he is usually shown on screen. Menzies, without the trademark Stanton beard, leads the manhunt for Booth, but he also seeks all the evidence that will tie Booth’s actions to the CSA Secret Service and the highest levels of the Confederate government itself. He is aided in his efforts by his son, Eddie Stanton (played by Brandon Flynn) and War Department Detective, Lafayette Baker (Oswald Patton). While not necessarily strictly “historical,” the series has enough history and drama to make it interesting.

I read John Fazio’s most recent book, *The Lincoln Assassination: Four Smoking Guns*,

so the TV series caught my attention. For historical research and accuracy, of course, one cannot do better than Fazio’s works, *Decapitating the Union* and *Four Smoking Guns*. John was a long-standing member of CCWRT and an inspiration to those of us who seek to find the true Civil War history and keep it alive.

“Manhunt” may not be a completely accurate picture of the post-assassination events, but there is enough history in it to pique the interest of any budding student of the topic.

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## ***2024 Dick Crews Memorial Debate Posted on the Roundtable's Website***

The annual Dick Crews Memorial Debate took place at the January 10, 2024, Roundtable meeting. This year's topic addressed the question, "Was George Gordon Meade aggressive enough in chasing Robert E. Lee's army after the Battle of Gettysburg?" Four members of the Roundtable prepared arguments to present their opinion on this question: Gary Taylor (critical of Meade), Bill Toler (defending Meade), Steve Pettyjohn (critical of Meade), and Chris Howard (defending Meade). William Vodrey again served as moderator. Because of illness, Bill Toler was not able to attend the debate, and Lily Korte used Bill's prepared argument to present Bill's opinion. Each of the arguments was compelling and insightful. The arguments that each debater prepared are now posted on the Roundtable's website and are well worth reading (<https://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com/the-great-debate-of-2024/>.)

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***George Crook***

By Dennis Keating

Ohioan George Crook (1828-1890) had a long and varied military career, fighting Native Americans before and after the Civil War. Along the way, Crook was involved in some major controversies.

### **Pre-War (Northwest Service)**

Crook graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1852. Assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry, Crook served in Northern California and Oregon through 1860. He engaged with several Native American tribes there. Leading the Pitt River expedition in Northern California in 1857, Crook was wounded.

### **Civil War**

Crook was appointed Colonel of the 36<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry (recruited in Southeast Ohio). He first led it in West Virginia, where he became commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade in Kanawha. In the brief battle at Lewisburg, (West) Virginia, Crook's small force defeated the Confederates led by Henry Heth. Crook was wounded again but promoted to brigadier general. Crook returned in time for the Second Battle of Bull Run, but the regiment was not engaged. During the ensuing

Maryland campaign, Crook took command of the Second Brigade of the Kanawha Division, attached to the Ninth Corps of the Army of the Potomac, following the capture of its commander. Crook led the brigade that Fall at the Battles of South Mountain and Antietam. At the latter battle near the Burnside Bridge, Crook was critical of how his superiors deployed his command, but he did not distinguish himself either. During this period, Crook first met Rutherford B. Hayes, then commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> OVI, who was wounded at the Battle of South Mountain. Their paths would cross again in 1864 in Virginia.

Crook was then transferred West to the Army of the Cumberland, where he became commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, XIV Corps, where he led it at the Battle of Hoover's Gap. In July 1863, he became commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, Cavalry Corps and fought at the Battle of Chickamauga and the ensuing Battles at Chattanooga.

In February 1864, Crook returned East to command the Kanawha Division (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of West Virginia). That Spring, as part of his overall coordinated offensive throughout the Confederacy, Grant ordered Crook to move his division (which included the 36<sup>th</sup> OVI which he once commanded) from Charleston, West Virginia to destroy the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at Dublin in Southwest Virginia, the nearby bridge over the New River, and the salt works at Saltville. On May 9, 1864, Crook's force met a small Confederate force attempting to defend Dublin and defeated them at the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain. Rutherford Hayes' brigade played a key role in the Union victory. While Crook then achieved his objectives of destruction of the railroad and the New River bridge, he headed back to West Virginia fearing a possible Confederate attempt to pursue and trap him.

On July 24, 1864, Crook's Kanawha force was defeated at the Second Battle of Kernstown outside Winchester by Jubal Early's army following its retreat from an invasion of Maryland. Crook's routed army barely escaped North, leaving Early in control of the Shenandoah Valley. Grant then chose Phil Sheridan to lead an army to defeat Early and clear the valley of Confederate control. While appointed to replace David Hunter to command the Department of West Virginia, Crook's Army of the Kanawha became a corps in Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah.

Crook's corps would then experience brilliant victory and disastrous defeat at the hands of Early's army. After Sheridan defeated Early on September 19 at the Battle of Opequon (Third Battle of Winchester), Early retreated South to a defensive position of Fisher's Hill near Strasburg. Rather than making a frontal assault, Sheridan took Crook's advice that his corps (known as the "Mountain Creepers") could flank Early, climb the ridge, and surprise the Confederates. On September 22, Crook's plan worked, breaking through Stephen Ramseur's



position and causing Early to fly further South. Crook took credit for this victory, but Sheridan also claimed it as his victory, resulting in enduring animus between the two.

With his reduced force greatly outnumbered by Sheridan, Early then agreed to an even more audacious plan. John B. Gordon proposed a perilous nighttime march and an early morning attack against Crook's corps, the left wing of Sheridan's army camped along Cedar Creek. On October 19, 1864, Gordon's soldiers crossed Cedar Creek in fog and routed Crook's corps (which included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division commanded by Rutherford Hayes, who narrowly escaped capture). Later that day, Sheridan would famously arrive from Winchester, rally his troops, and proceed to again shatter Early's army, which was virtually destroyed, leaving the Union in control of the Shenandoah Valley.

Crook next experienced yet another low point on February 21, 1865. While asleep in Cumberland, Maryland, Crook (and General Benjamin Kelley) were captured by a Confederate raiding party. Crook was held in Richmond for a month until he was paroled.

Crook then led a cavalry division under Phil Sheridan during the Appomattox campaign that resulted in Lee's surrender in April 1865. He engaged the retreating Confederates in several fights, including the Battle of Saylor's Creek against Ewell's Corps.

### **Post War (Frontier Duty)**



General Crook and Apache Scout in Arizona

Crook first returned to the Northwest region as commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Infantry. He fought the Paiutes in Eastern Oregon. In 1867, he became head of the Department of the Columbia. He later defeated a combined force of Paiutes, Pit River, and Modoc warriors at the Battle of

Infernal Caverns in Northern California. His preferred tactic was to attack the tribes during winter.

Crook then was assigned to command the Arizona Territory. He successfully prevailed over the Yavapai and Tonto Apache and tribes over the period 1871-75. The major battles occurred in December 1872, at Salt River Canyon and March 1873, at Turret Peak. Many then surrendered at Crook's Camp Verde and Crook concluded a treaty with Cochise.

Crook's next command from 1875-1882 was the Department of the Platte, headquartered in Nebraska. With the refusal of some Sioux leaders such as Sitting Bull to agree to sell the sacred Black Hills in the tribal reservation, a campaign began to force them back to the reservation. Three columns led by Generals John Gibbon, George Armstrong Custer, and Crook under the overall command of General Alfred Terry were to converge on hostile natives (including the Northern Cheyenne and other tribes) once they could be located. Crook headed North toward the Montana Territory on May 29, 1876, with a column of 1,051 cavalry and mounted infantry, joined later by a few hundred Shoshone and Crow allies.

On the morning of June 17, Crook's column stopped along Rosebud Creek unprepared for an attack. It came unexpectedly from hundreds of warriors led by Crazy Horse. Fortunately for Crook, his Native allies initially deterred the attack, allowing Crook to organize his defensive position. After a protracted battle, the attackers withdrew North to their camp along the Little Big Horn. Instead of pursuing the attackers, Crook also withdrew to his base camp at Goose Creek to resupply and await reinforcements. He would later come under heavy criticism for not at least trying to warn Custer's column of the unusual movement of the Natives who attacked his column. Meanwhile, his own Native allies left him when he would not resume the advance.

After the army re-organized for further offensive action in what became known as the "Great Sioux War", Crook once again took to the field. Crook was described thusly:

"A battered slouch hat would have been carelessly thrust upon his head and his boots would have been dusty. In the field, except that everyone knew him, General Crook might have been taken for a Montana miner. The only part of his uniform he wore was an old overcoat, except in wet weather he wore moccasins, and his slight, bushy beard would be gathered in a series of braids." (Aleshire, p. 197)

Crook's undersupplied column was eventually reduced to eating their animals during the so-called "Horsemeat March". In search of supplies at the town of Deadwood, a detachment of



Crook's troops successfully attacked an Indian village and repulsed a counterattack led by Crazy Horse at the Battle of Slim Buttes on September 9, 1876.

In 1882 Crook returned to Arizona. There, he fought the Chiricahua Apache Geronimo and forced him back to the reservation in 1884. However, poor conditions on the San Carlos Apache reservation led Geronimo to escape. In March 1886, he met with Geronimo, who agreed to surrender. However, it was aborted by a false warning of betrayal and Geronimo fled to Mexico. That ended Crook's tenure in Arizona with his resignation. In September 1886, Geronimo did surrender to General Nelson A. Miles. Miles sent Geronimo and his band to imprisonment in Florida. But he also sent Crook's Apache scouts there despite Crook's protests. The scouts were imprisoned there for the next 28 years over Crook's repeated protests.

Crook's repeated efforts to assure that those Indians who agreed to stay on reservations were treated fairly were undercut:

"Repeatedly, Crook tried to convince his superiors, politicians, and the public that the Indian wars could be ended by treating the Indians with simple justice, and giving individual Indians land, cattle, crops, and other resources that would wean him away from dependence upon the tribe." (Aleshire, p. 223)

Crook returned to the Department of the Platte from 1886 to 1888, when President Cleveland made him head of the Department of the Missouri. On March 21, 1890, George Crook died of a heart attack in Chicago on March 21, 1890, months before the massacre of Sioux by the Seventh Cavalry at Wounded Knee, ending the Plains Indian wars.

## **Summary**

George Crook's Civil War military record was mixed. His biographer Paul Magid concluded:

"In sum, though he exhibited areas of weakness and made several mistakes during the war, there can be no doubt that overall Crook established a fine record of leadership and achievement." (Magid, p. 346)

Positively, he was the architect of the Union victory at Fisher's Hill in Fall, 1864 and he performed well at the Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga, led some successful raids after returning East, and played an important role in the capture of Lee's army in the Appomattox

campaign. Negatively, he lost the Second Battle of Kernstown, had his corps surprised and routed at Cedar Creek, and briefly spent time in Confederate captivity in 1864.

In his extensive experience with Native Americans, he was generally successful, utilizing mule trains for troops and supplies, employing novel tactics, and relying heavily upon Native scouts against their enemy fellow Indians. However, his performance at the Battle of the Rosebud in 1876 was his worst. Crook fought some of the most famous Indian war leaders, including Crazy Horse, Cochise, and Geronimo. Despite this, Crook was very sympathetic to the plight of the tribes as they were losing their way of life to westward American expansion and were regularly betrayed after signing peace treaties with the United States. He generally did his best to advocate on their behalf (except perhaps for his role in 1889 in persuading enough Sioux to agree to the partition of the Black Hills to allow for White settlement in that region).

In contrast to his friendship with Rutherford B. Hayes, Crook became embroiled in bitter disputes with Phil Sheridan and Nelson Miles, both of whom became commanders of the U.S. Army. Crook is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, where you will find the Crook Way, a path named in his honor.

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1/92 Scale Model of CSA Balloon "Gazelle" and its Tender, "CSS Teazer"  
Model Built by the Author's Friend, Scott Hollingshead, Buchanan, MI

## ***Observation Balloons***

By Al Fonner

The incorporation of ballooning into military strategy was not a new idea when the Civil War started in April 1861. During the French Revolutionary Wars, the French monitored via balloon observations enemy positions and movements during the Battle of Fleurus on June 26, 1794, which allowed them to achieve a decisive victory over the First Coalition. Napoleon intended to employ balloons for observations during his Egyptian campaign in 1798; but the British destroyed the balloons before they could be unloaded. The Austrians employed 20-foot diameter balloons to drop explosives on Venice during its siege in 1849; but, due to shifting winds, the balloons drifted back over the Austrians, necessitating their discontinuation. The military value of ballooning was not entirely lost to the United States (U.S.). In one example, U.S. Army Col. John Sherburne during the Second Seminole War suggested using balloons to assess the position of the Seminole Indians by their campfires; but the idea was rejected because of the local terrain.

With the onset of hostilities in 1861, and fearing an attack by the Rebels on the Nation's capital, panic ensued in Washington, D.C. Several American balloonists sought to offer their services to the Union cause, including James Allen, John LaMountain, John Wise, and the Thaddeus Lowe. Allen, however, lost his balloons during demonstrations in Washington, D.C. but would serve

under Lowe in the soon-to-be formed Balloon Corps. Likewise, Wise met with disaster while demonstrating his balloons: one was destroyed after being caught in trees, and another was blown away. Wise would spend the rest of the war as a Pennsylvania Volunteers Cavalry officer.

LaMountain's efforts would also prove fruitless until he was privately contracted by General Benjamin Butler to provide ariel reconnaissance of the Confederate positions around Fort Monroe in Virginia making his first ariel surveillance on July 25, 1861, but left on August 10, 1861, after running out of supplies. During this time, LaMountain experimented with free ascension, where the balloon was not tethered to the ground. LaMountain eventually was assigned to work under Lowe in the Balloon Corps. Free ascension would prove contentious between Lowe, who preferred tethered ascension, and LaMountain. However, the Army fully backed Lowe; and General George McClelland dismissed LaMountain from military service, on February 19, 1862.

Lowe brought ballooning to the attention of Abraham Lincoln. With the endorsement of Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, Lowe demonstrated for the President on June 17, 1861, in Washington D.C., the balloon's military potential for observation. Lowe ascended in his balloon, *Enterprise*, to 500 feet. From there, he telegraphed back to the President that, from that height, he could see 50 miles in any direction. Lincoln was sold, and Lowe was soon made head of a newly formed U.S. Balloon Core, a civilian organization under direction of the U.S. Army. Lowe initially made daily ascensions after the first Bull Run along the Potomac River near Washington, D.C. These ascensions revealed that there was no immediate Confederate threat to the Nation's capital, which alleviated the fears of citizens and military authorities alike.



A Balloon Ascension at Seven Pines and a Field Inflation of a Balloon

The balloons used by the civilian aeronauts such as Lowe, Wise, and LaMountain proved to be too delicate for military operations. Therefore, Lowe designed, and the government fabricated, several balloons of varying sizes. These new balloons consisted of multiple layers of silk and were coated with up to four layers of varnish to make them airtight. A total of seven balloons were constructed for the Balloon Corps. The largest, the *Union* and the *Intrepid*, were 32,000 cubic feet and could carry five people. The *Constitution* and the *United States* at 25,000 cubic feet had capacity for three people. The *Washington* at 20,000 cubic feet could carry two people. The *Eagle* and the *Excelsior* were the smallest at 15,000 cubic feet; they each could only carry one person.

To inflate the balloons, coal gas from nearby cities' gas works was initially used which necessitated that the balloons be inflated near cities and then transported to their launching point. To address this limitation, Lowe designed and built several special wagons that carried large metal tanks filled with scrap metal and acid. The scrap metal and acid reacted to produce hydrogen gas that was then pumped into the balloons. These special wagons allowed the balloons to travel with the army and be inflated in the field. However, the wagons were cumbersome to move; thus, keeping up with an army maneuvering over difficult terrain in fluid situations would prove difficult.

Balloons were typically tethered to the ground when they ascended. Balloons would eventually be launched from the water, as well. Lowe converted an old coal barge, the USS *George Washington Parke Curtis*, to support balloon operations. This barge was towed by the USS *Steppingstone*. LaMountain, too, would launch balloons in August 1861 from the USS *Fanny* and the USS *Adriatic*. Conducting balloon operations from these floating bases alleviated to a degree the problems encountered when the army moved across difficult terrain, particularly during the Peninsula Campaign when the balloons were launched from the Potomac River.

Lowe recommended that three to four ropes be used to tether the balloons. To achieve this, Lowe procured three to four 5000-foot reels of cable for each balloon. One incident that demonstrated the importance of properly tethering the balloons to the ground occurred on April 11, 1862, during the siege of Yorktown. Major General Fitz John Porter, who had made several ascensions with Lowe, decided to reconnoiter the Confederate lines and ascended in a balloon tethered with only one line. The line broke and Porter was carried over the Confederate lines. Fortunately, the winds shifted, and Porter drifted back to behind the Union lines, where he was able to land the balloon safely.

To communicate with those on the ground, Lowe proposed that telegraph lines be extended from the ground to the balloon, as when he demonstrated the balloon for Lincoln. The larger balloons were outfitted with the necessary telegraph equipment and ascensions included capable telegraphers. Other means of communications employed by the balloonists included signal flags, weighted messages dropped from the balloons, and signal flares. In one case, a first in the annals of military history, Lowe ascended in the balloon *Union* from Arlington, VA, in September 1861, to successfully direct using a white flag Union artillery fire on Confederate positions three miles distant at Falls Creek, VA.

The fortunes of the Union Balloon Corps and Lowe were at their height, no pun intended, while under Gen. George McClellan. Balloon operations provided limited intelligence during the Peninsula Campaign, such as during the Siege of Yorktown; Gaines' Mill; and Seven Pines, or Fair Oaks. With McClellan out of favor following his failure in the Peninsula, military emphasis shifted to Maj. Gen. John Pope's forces in Northern VA; but Pope showed no interest in balloons. After Pope's defeat at the Second Bull Run, the Balloon Corp's fortunes brightened with the reinstatement of McClellan. However, logistical problems prevented the Balloon Corp from participating in the Antietam Campaign. After McClellan's dismissal, Gen. Ambrose Burnside took over the Army of the Potomac. Burnside would employ Lowe and his balloons in a limited fashion at Fredericksburg, not wanting to alert the Confederates of his intent, to reconnoiter Rebel positions. However, the area's heavy forests and smoke from the battle greatly hampered the balloonists' efforts to provide useful information.



Following the Fredericksburg debacle, Gen. Joseph Hooker replaced Burnside as Army commander. Under Hooker, the Balloon Corps was placed under the direction of Col. George Sharpe. Sharpe and Hooker worked together to create a comprehensive intelligence network that combined information from various sources, such as ground reconnaissance and espionage assets, along with balloon observations, to form a more accurate picture of the situation on the field. Additionally, Hooker assigned Capt. Cyrus Comstock over the Balloon Corps to provide more formal control of its administration and operations. Hooker employed the Balloon Corps during the Chancellorsville Campaign; but, while the balloon observations contributed reasonable observations concerning Lee's movements and positions, Hooker either chose to ignore it or did not believe it.

The Confederates, too, experimented with balloons as observation platforms. Their first balloon, constructed in the spring of 1862, was made of cotton, coated with varnish, and inflated with hot air. Capt. John Byran launched the balloon on April 13, 1862, over Yorktown, during which he was able to make some sketches of Union positions. On the second flight, however, Byran had to cut the tether when someone on the ground became entangled in the rope. Byran survived the free flight, despite being fired on by Confederate troops who thought his was a Union balloon.

The Confederates second balloon was constructed by Landon Cheves in Savannah, GA. Nicknamed the *Gazelle*, this multi-colored balloon was made of silk and rumored to have been made from women's dresses, which was not true. The balloon was filled with gas in Richmond, VA, and transported to the battlefield via rail. The balloon was then transferred to the tugboat, CSS *Teazer*. The *Gazelle* would be piloted by Lt. Col. Edward Porter Alexander (Lee's future Artillery Chief) during the Seven Day Campaign. On July 4, 1862, the *Teazer* was attacked on the James River by Union ships and captured. The *Gazelle* was given to Lowe, who cut it into pieces, sending them to members of Congress as souvenirs.

The Union's Balloon Corps would be disbanded in August 1863 by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Its effectiveness was spotty at best. While the intelligence provided was occasionally useful, it was limited and often ignored. Many senior commanders looked suspiciously at this new technology and doubted the veracity of the civilian aeronauts who boasted of their accomplishments. Although the reorganization under Hooker proved necessary, the intelligence gleaned would only be useful in the hands of a decisive command organization.

Another problem that contributed to the demise of the Balloon Corps was that it was a civilian organization. Obtaining necessary material and supplies through Army channels proved challenging for even a resourceful showman such as Lowe. As if that were not trouble enough, salaries for Lowe and his aeronauts often went unpaid, or short when paid. Additionally, recruiting the necessary ground crew and balloon handlers from Army sources was often problematic as regimental officers were resistant to reassigning their personnel, even temporarily, to what many considered a novelty. Finally, the Army balked at the additional expense of maintaining an organization that was not fully proven, so much so that Capt. Comstock cut spending and reduced Lowe's pay. Lowe resigned from army service on May 8, 1863.

In the end, probably the most important effect that ballooning had on during the Civil War was psychological. Writing for *The Century* magazine after the war, Confederate Gen. James Longstreet lamented, "The Federals had been using balloons in examining our positions, and we



watched with curious eyes their beautiful observations as they floated high up in the air, and well out of the range of our guns. We longed for the balloons that poverty denied us.” (Paone, 1)

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U.S. Balloon, “Intrepid”



### *Why is This Man Not Smiling? Grant's Choppers*

By Brian D. Kowell

In February 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant was aboard his headquarters boat the steamer *Magnolia*. The ship was tied to the bank at Young's Point on the Mississippi River as Grant struggled to find a way to capture Vicksburg. Guards were stationed at the gangplanks to make sure the general went undisturbed while he pondered the problem over his maps.

But Vicksburg wasn't the only problem Grant had to wrestle with. On February 11 he wrote to his wife Julia who was in Memphis. "I met with a great loss this morning." He went on to tell her that the night before, "contrary to my usual habit, I took out my [false] teeth and put them in the wash bason[sic] and covered them with water." The next morning, he discovered that his servant, not knowing the dentures were there, emptied the basin overboard, "teeth and all" in the muddy waters of the Mississippi River. He asked Julia to try to get in touch with a dentist who could quickly make him a new pair.

For the next few days, the toothless general had to gum his orders and stick to a liquid diet until a new set of dentures arrived. Word soon leaked out about the general's mishap. One Illinois soldier wrote home that "I heard a good joke on Genl. Grant today. His Nigger waiting upon him threw a bowl of water overboard in which the Genl had placed his false teeth, so that he is around now without any upper teeth. Ha! Ha!"

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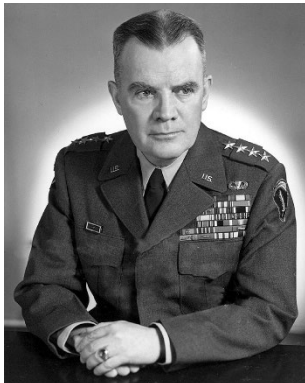
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## *History Repeating Itself, without the "Condemned"*

by David A. Carrino

George Santayana famously wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Santayana's use of the word "condemned" makes it seem like a repetition of the past is undesirable and is something to be avoided. But some things in the past are worth repeating, and one such thing happened in a small, little-known Civil War battle. Something which happened in that battle was, in a sense, repeated in a much more widely known incident that occurred in World War II.



In December 1944, a powerful German attack created a bulge into the Allied lines and led to the fierce battle which derives its name from that bulge. As a result of this German penetration, a U.S. force that included the 101st Airborne Division became surrounded by German forces in Bastogne, Belgium. The Germans sent a group of four emissaries under a flag of truce with a message asking the Americans to surrender. Low on food, ammunition, and medical supplies, the situation for the Americans seemed hopeless. In spite of this, General Anthony McAuliffe (pictured), the acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division, sent a one-word response to the Germans: "NUTS!" This audacious reply has become legendary. It is doubtful that McAuliffe knew, but he was, in a way, repeating something that an obscure Union officer did in a small battle in 1863.

The Union officer in question is Colonel Orlando Moore. Moore was mentioned in an article about Pauline Cushman that appeared in last month's issue of *The Charger*. As described in the article, Cushman served as a spy for the Union army, and Moore is the person who recruited Cushman into espionage. Pennsylvania-born, Moore moved as a boy with his family to Schoolcraft, Michigan, which is due south of Kalamazoo and due west of Vicksburg. (But not that Vicksburg; Schoolcraft is due west of Vicksburg, Michigan.) Prior to the Civil War, Moore, who was an accomplished musician, was in the regular army. He remained loyal to the Union and was commissioned as commander of the 25th Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment on August 18, 1862. The 25th Michigan was sent to Louisville,

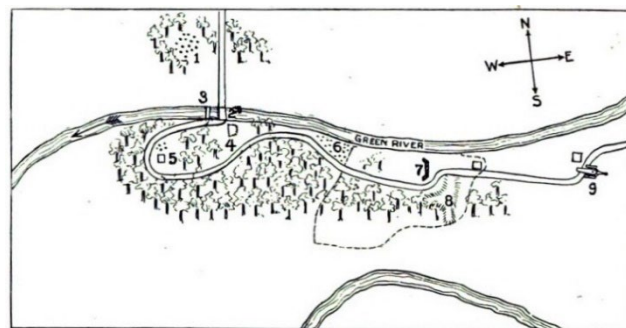
Kentucky in late September 1862 as part of the Union's occupation force, and Moore served in that city as the provost marshal. Because of his firmness, Moore was unpopular among the city's residents, who pressured the authorities to remove Moore.



Colonel Orlando Moore

In June 1863 Moore was dispatched with five companies of the 25th Michigan to oppose Confederate raiders, in particular John Hunt Morgan's cavalry. At this time Morgan was beginning the raid that eventually brought his unit north of the Ohio River and into southern Ohio. Moore received word that Morgan was moving northward through Kentucky, and Moore wanted to position his small force of about 200 to block Morgan's much larger force of about 2,500. Not only was Morgan's force larger, Morgan also had a battery of artillery, while Moore had no artillery.

On July 2, 1863, Moore learned that Morgan was moving toward a bridge that crossed over the Green River at a bend in the river known as Tebbs Bend. In order to block Morgan's advance, Moore occupied a position along the road to that bridge. To compensate for his smaller force, Moore astutely selected a position in the narrow peninsula at Tebbs Bend such that bluffs on either side protected Moore's flanks. Moore had his troops prepare a defensive position that consisted of a strong line of earthworks in front of which was a rifle pit, and in front of the rifle pit was abatis that Moore's troops prepared in anticipation of Morgan's arrival. Morgan's force appeared on the morning of July 4, and when Morgan encountered Moore's strong position, he deployed artillery and shelled the Union force. Despite the strong enemy position, Morgan expected an easy victory in what became the first battle of Morgan's Raid of 1863.



1—First camp north of the river. 2—Bridge. 3—Ford. 4—Stockade. 5—Hospital. 6—Gore of fallen timber. 7—Outer works. 8—Ravines. 9—Rebel artillery. .... Lines within which the battle was fought, including the log building seized by the rebel skirmishers to begin the fight.

After several shots were fired, Morgan sent forward a party of officers under a flag of truce with a note from Morgan directed to "the officer commanding the Federal Forces at Stockade near Green River Bridge, Ky." Moore went forward himself to meet with the Confederate officers, who gave Moore the note. Morgan's note demanded "an immediate and unconditional surrender of the entire force under your command." Moore read the note and, despite being greatly outnumbered, he said to the Confederate officers, "Present my compliments to General Morgan, and say to him that, this being the fourth day of July, I cannot entertain his proposition." With this defiant reply, Moore rebuffed the Confederate emissaries as assuredly as McAuliffe did to the Germans, although Moore's reply was not as succinct as McAuliffe's, but it was certainly more eloquent. Coming as they did in adverse military situations, both of the refusals to surrender were a thumb in the eye of the enemy.

With his surrender demand rejected, Morgan intensified his efforts to dislodge Moore's force. However, from their strong position the Union soldiers were able to shoot quite a few of the men in the Confederate gun crews. This neutralized Morgan's artillery advantage, because the guns were withdrawn after so many in the gun crews were shot. Unable to blast the Union force from its position, the Confederates attempted to assault the enemy, even though the assaults were through open ground and abatis in a narrow area that negated the Confederates' superiority in numbers. Eight assaults by dismounted cavalry were made on Moore's position, and each one was bloodily repulsed. A seemingly taunting observation about the repeated attacks is in an account of the battle by Lieutenant B.F. Travis of the 25th Michigan, who wrote dryly, "Each charge was made with less vim," which reflects the diminishing enthusiasm of the Confederate attackers after they saw the outcome of previous assaults. Finally, after four hours of fighting, Morgan was the one who threw in the towel. Realizing the futility of continuing the fight, Morgan sent forward another party under a flag of truce. But this time it was not to demand surrender; it was to ask for a pause in hostilities to allow the Confederates to remove their dead and wounded.

Morgan lost 36 killed and 45 wounded, including at least 20 experienced, capable officers. Moore lost far fewer, 6 killed and 24 wounded. Thus, not only did Moore give Morgan a thumb in the eye, Moore also gave Morgan a bloody nose, as well as a bad omen for the raid that eventually ended disastrously in the Buckeye State. Counting only those actually engaged in the Battle of Tebbs Bend, Moore defeated a force that outnumbered him by four to five times. Moreover, that much larger force was under the command of one of the most heralded Confederate cavalry commanders (who clearly underestimated the enemy on this day). Following his defeat, Morgan withdrew and went around Moore's force to continue his movement to the Ohio River. That Morgan's cavalry force was able to ford the Green River indicates that Morgan need not have engaged Moore in a useless and unnecessary fight that cost Morgan many men. (A detailed account of the battle, including maps, is available online (<https://www.tebbsbend.org/history.html>).)

As for Moore, he and his troops were lauded for their victory on July 4, 1863, although the Union victory at the relatively small Battle of Tebbs Bend was certainly far overshadowed by the much larger and more significant Union victory on that same day at Vicksburg (Vicksburg, Mississippi, not Vicksburg, Michigan). Just as the Battle of Vicksburg overshadows the Battle of Tebbs Bend, the inspiring incident at Bastogne in which Anthony McAuliffe played the leading role is far more widely known than the



stirring incident at Tebbs Bend involving Orlando Moore. Likewise, McAuliffe's cutting response to the German demand for surrender is well-known, while Moore's sardonic reply is not. This is unfortunate, since Moore deserves more widespread renown for his sharp retort, particularly because Moore's remark came on Independence Day and Moore was quick-witted enough to make that fact the centerpiece of his reply. Widely known or not, Moore's defiant reply to the surrender demand is a historic incident that was repeated by McAuliffe at Bastogne. This makes clear that sometimes a repetition of the past is a good thing and can happen without anyone being condemned.

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## SPOTSYLVANIA

by John C. Fazio

It is one of the peculiarities of the history of the war that the importance of the battle of Spotsylvania is frequently minimized and sometimes overlooked entirely.

A speaker at CCWRT several years ago, Kris White, wrote:



The battle of Spotsylvania Court House generally gets no attention of its own, but instead gets grouped in as part of Grant's Overland Campaign, which seldom makes the list of anyone's favorite battle.

I should first like to talk about the battle itself and then about why I believe it was the most important of the war.

Excepting siege battles, i.e. Corinth, Vicksburg, Atlanta and Petersburg, the battle of Spotsylvania was the longest of the war – a rolling 13-day slugfest that extended from May 7 through May 19, 1864. This contrasts sharply with other major battles, namely:

Shiloh .....2 days  
Antietam.....1 day  
Fredericksburg .....5 days  
Chancellorsville .....7 days  
Chickamauga.....2 days, and Second Bull Run, Murfreesboro, Gettysburg and  
the Wilderness.....3 days each

As for casualties: Spotsylvania, at almost 32,000, had about the same number as Chancellorsville and was exceeded only by Gettysburg (51,000) and Chickamauga (35,000). During the period May 7 – 19, there was heavy fighting, as follows:

**May 7 and 8:** The Battle of Todd's Tavern, a cavalry battle between Phil Sheridan and Jeb Stuart. It was Sheridan's purpose to clear the Brock Road to Spotsylvania Court House; Stuart's to stop him. The result was inconclusive, but it was an obstinate struggle and casualties were heavy on both sides.

**May 8:** The Battle of Laurel Hill, where Union Generals Gouverneur Warren and John Sedgwick failed to dislodge General Richard H. Anderson. Fighting was fierce and casualties were heavy here too.

**May 9:** Corps Commander "Uncle" John Sedgwick was killed by a Confederate sharpshooter. Horatio G. Wright replaced him.

**May 9:** The Confederates consolidated their defensive positions as a salient, dubbed the Mule Shoe because of its shape.

**May 10:** At 2 p.m., Jubal Early, commanding the Third Corps, attacked Francis Barlow west of the Mule Shoe and drove him northward across the Po River. At 4 p.m., Warren again attacked the Laurel Hill line and again failed in his purpose, with heavy loss. At 5 p.m. Union General Gershom Mott's Second Corps division made an unauthorized attack on the Mule Shoe and was badly mauled by Confederate artillery. At 6 p.m., Col. Emory Upton led 12 hand-picked regiments – almost 5,000 men – in a major assault on the Mule Shoe at a point known as Dole's

Salient. He succeeded in piercing the Confederate line, but, without sufficient support, he couldn't hold his position.

**May 12:** Three divisions of Winfield Scott Hancock's Second Corps, under Generals Barlow, Mott and David Birney, with General John Gibbon's division in reserve, a total of 20,000 men, slammed into the Mule Shoe at 4:30 a.m. It should be observed that this charge was greater even than Pickett's and Pettigrew's more famous charge at Gettysburg. Hancock's men overwhelmed the divisions of Robert Rodes and Edward "Allegheny" Johnson of Richard Ewell's Second Corps, capturing between 3,000 and 4,000 graybacks, including division commander Johnson and brigade commander George "Maryland" Steuart, plus 18 guns and 30 flags. They were not, however, able to exploit their victory, because a strong counterattack by General John B. Gordon's division recaptured most of the lost ground and set the stage for almost 24 straight hours of the most savage fighting of the war, in pouring rain, water, mist and mud, at what became known as the Bloody Angle. It is written that "The combat they had endured for almost 24 hours was characterized by an intensity of firepower never previously seen in Civil War battles, as the entire landscape was flattened and all the foliage destroyed", and further that "Nothing can describe the confusion, the savage, blood-curdling yells, the murderous faces, the awful curses, and the grisly horror of the melee", and further that "The fighting at the Bloody Angle was the most prolonged and intense hand-to-hand combat of the war."

**May 13 to 16:** Because of the wet weather, combat slowed as the combatants reoriented their lines.

**May 17:** The weather finally cleared.

**May 18:** The battle was renewed by another massive frontal assault on the Mule Shoe by Hancock's Second Corps, with Wright's Sixth Corps on his right and Ambrose Burnside's Ninth Corps on his left. It stumbled on a steely resistance. Confederate entrenchments had been greatly strengthened during the lull in the fighting. Further, Union forces did not have the element of surprise that they had had on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Still further, Confederate artillery was now in place, not moved away by Lee as it had been on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

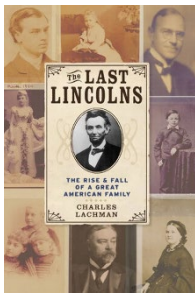
**May 19:** Elements of both armies (Ewell's Second Corps – Gordon and Rodes – and Birney's Second Corps division) met north and east of the battlefield at the Harris Farm, where they fought until 9:00 p.m., the Confederates losing another 900 men.

That, then, was the battle. Why was it the most important of the war? Because it, together with Grant's turn southward at the Plank Rd. – Brock Rd., intersection after his defeat in the Wilderness, which preceded it, signaled the new Union goal of destroying Lee's army, rather than capturing the Confederate capital, i.e. to win the war by attrition, by grinding down the Army of Northern Virginia to a point when it would cease to be an effective fighting force. Spotsylvania thus represents the true turning point of the war. It was not Antietam, because though that battle kept the foreigners out, which was important, it was too early to be decisive. It

was not Gettysburg and Vicksburg, because the Confederacy could still have won the war with what it had left after those battles, as it demonstrated with major victories at Chickamauga and in the Wilderness, though, needless to say, Gettysburg and Vicksburg contributed much to the Confederacy's ultimate fate. After Spotsylvania, however, that fate was sealed, and no one knew it better than Robert E. Lee, because he could count. Outnumbered by almost 2 to 1, Lee knew that Grant could accept twice as many casualties as he and still grind him to powder, which is what Grant did, losing 17,500 to Lee's 8,000 in the Wilderness, 19,000 to Lee's 13,000 at Spotsylvania; 13,000 to Lee's 2,500 at Cold Harbor; 4,000 to Lee's 1,500 at the Crater; 4,300 to Lee's 1,600 at Globe Tavern; and 42,000 to Lee's 28,000 at Petersburg. But after Spotsylvania, it simply didn't matter. Grant went into the Spotsylvania campaign with about 100,000 effectives. Lee met him with about 60,000. By Appomattox, less than a year later, Grant still had 100,000; Lee had 28,000. A Confederate summed it up as follows: "We have met a man, this time, who either does not know when he is whipped, or cares not if he loses his entire army." Right. He cared not if he lost his entire army, as long as Lee lost his first, which he did. End of story.

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## BOOK REVIEW



Charles Lachman, *The Last Lincolns: The Rise and Fall of A Great American Family*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 2008

When one begins to study the lives of some of the great American statesmen and women my mind often wanders to questions such as: what ever happened to their descendants. Although Washington had no children, he had two stepchildren one died young and the other became the father-in-law of Robert E. Lee. Descendants of Roosevelt, McKinley, John Tyler, Grant, and others are out there but remain for the most part a mystery. Charles Lachman's book "The Last Lincoln's" goes into the descending family members of our sixteenth president. Who they were, what they did for a living, and what happened to them. An interesting read if one is interested in out of the way historical facts. The author has evidently done some painstaking research and presents some fantastic and informative antic-dotes regarding Lincoln's descendants.

So what did happen to the direct line coming from Abraham Lincoln and moving into the twentieth century? The answer is "many things." The immediate family was crushed by the assassination of the president so much so that Mary Lincoln did not attend any of the funeral services. Robert arranged them and with the help of Governor John Brough of Ohio who had known Lincoln before the War they managed to secure a funeral route and burial plot in Springfield, Illinois. The family then went back to Chicago to live, Springfield having to many memories for Mary to go back and live there. Robert went to night school and eventually became a well-known lawyer in Illinois. Mary took their youngest son Tad to live in Europe but returned in 1871. Robert eventually married Mary Harlan a senator's daughter and took up residence on Wabash St. in Chicago. Robert Todd Lincoln went on to lead a very diverse and productive life as lawyer, diplomat, Secretary of War, Gilded Age Tycoon, and head of one of America's

foremost families. He suffered from depression and had a nervous breakdown, much of which had to do with the emotional condition of his mother Mary Lincoln. He was a golf enthusiast and spent the final years of his life at his estate “Hildene” in Vermont where he built a private golf course which is open to the public today. It was Robert who decided what to do about his father’s remains, he devised a plan to bury the former president beneath six feet of solid concrete so as to prevent any subsequent plots to steal Lincoln’s body. The reburial occurred in 1901 and it was at this time that the lid was taken off the coffin and young Fleetwood Lindley saw the face of the sixteenth president and experience he related to Life Magazine in 1963 just before his own death. Robert Lincoln died on July 26, 1926, and had one son Abraham Lincoln II who died in France as a young boy, he had two daughters Mamie and Jessie. Mamie married Charles Isham a historian, their son Lincoln Isham made his home in Manhattan and according to the author frequented the Stork Club where he played guitar and socialized with many prominent people, he died in 1981. Jessie married three times, first to Warren Beckwith a member of the Iowa Wesleyan football team and they went to live in Chicago but after their divorce she eventually moved to New York City and then to Virginia. The direct line of Lincoln’s descended through Beckwith the name of Jessie’s first husband. The last Lincoln, Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, Abraham Lincoln’s great-great grandson was married three times and lived at “Hildene.” He passed away on Christmas Eve 1985 ending the direct line of Abraham Lincoln’s descendants. There were many more colorful characters who were members of Lincoln’s family who are too numerous to include in this review but who are brought to life in Mr. Lachman’s book. This was a great reading experience. I got to know several members of the extended Lincoln family that one never hears about but nevertheless contributed to our national story. I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in their own genealogy or family history or to anyone wanting to delve into some of the lesser-known people who nevertheless were members of one of America’s most prominent families.

--Paul Siedel

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23<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Infantry Regimental Band

**FINIS!**