



The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. Box 18900, Cleveland, Ohio 44118

SEPTEMBER 1992

308th MEETING

VOL. 14 #1

DATE:

**PLEASE NOTE NEW MEETING
DAY
WEDNESDAY,** September 9, 1992

PLACE:

The Hermit Club

SUBJECT:

Civil War Prisons - Myth or Reality?

SPEAKER:

Dr. Frank L. Byrne. Dr. Byrne is no stranger to the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. An entertaining as well as knowledgeable speaker, Dr. Byrne is currently on the faculty at Kent State University. He has been at Kent State since 1966. Originally from New Jersey, he received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1957. He taught at Louisiana State and Creighton University before coming to Kent State. He has published extensively on the Civil War having edited Your True Marcus; The Civil War Letters of Colonel Marcus Spiegel and The View from Headquarters; The Civil War Letters of H. Reid. He authored the chapter on Civil War Prisons in the National Historical Society's Image of the War Vol. IV.

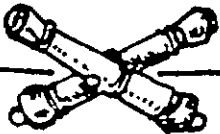
TIME:

Drinks 6PM

Dinner 7PM

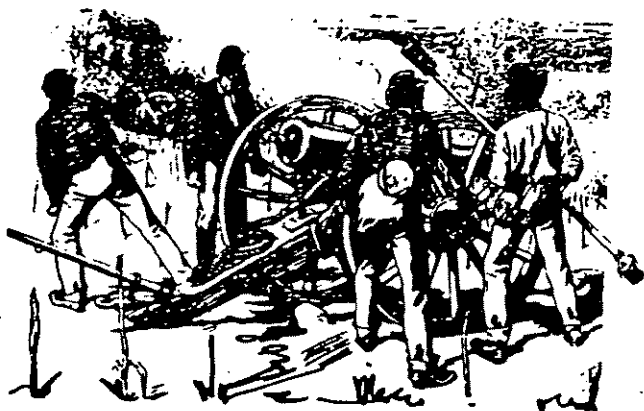
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Please call Kevin Callahan at 932-9860 or 363-6048. RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST!



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

1957 * 1992



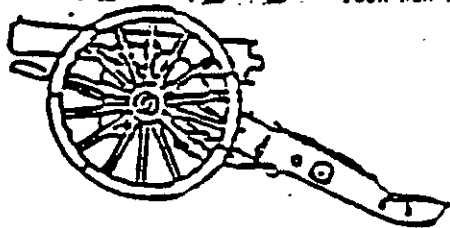
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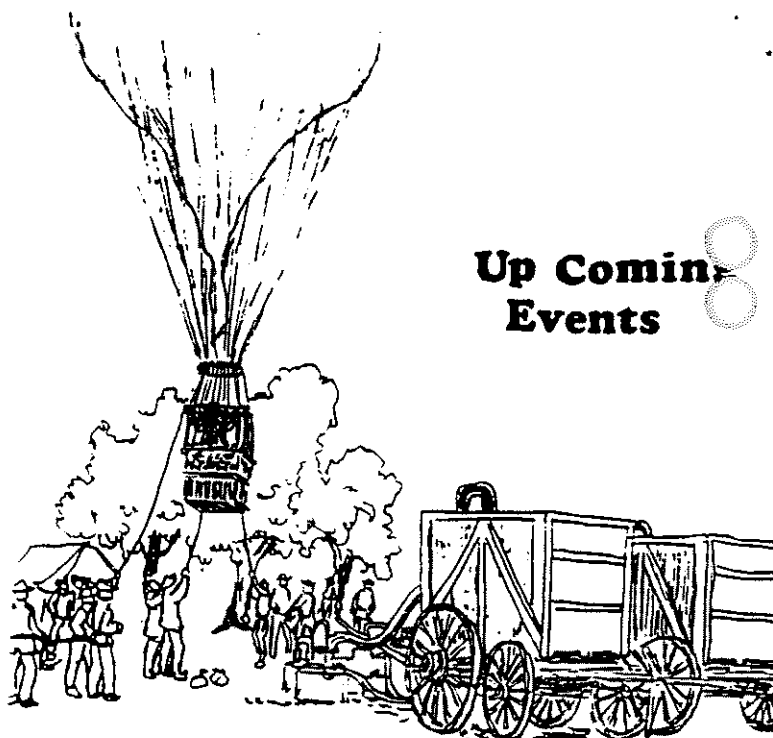
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Preserve Your Battlefields!



Up Coming Events



THIS YEAR'S SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & SPEAKERS

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| <u>October 14</u> | Ted Alexander
McClausland's Raid & The
Burning of Chambersburg |
| <u>November 11</u> | George Woodling
Topic to be announced |
| <u>December 9</u> | Eric J. Wittenburg
"Joshua Chamberlain: The
Fighting Professor" |
| <u>January 13</u> | Annual Civil War Quiz |
| <u>February 10</u> | Kenneth R. Callahan, Jr.
"James K. O'Reilly of the
8th Ohio" |
| <u>March 10</u> | Dr. Benjamin Cooling
"Defending Washington on
Jubal Early's Raid on
Washington" |
| <u>April 14</u> | Dr. Richard J. Sommers
"Grant & Lee at Petersburg" |
| <u>May 12</u> | Surprise Speaker |

1992

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

FIELD TRIP

SEPTEMBER 24TH - 25TH & 26TH

PETERSBURG

and The Retreat with Historian Chris Calkins
Thursday, September 24th

Welcome to Petersburg. Best Western Model I-95 & Petersburg.
Dinner: Mayfield Restaurant - West Petersburg
Speaker: Chris Calkins

Friday, September 25th

The Siege of Petersburg (Battery 5 - Fort Stedman - Crater - City Pt.) tour the Siege Museum.

Saturday, September 26th

Petersburg, Five Forks & Sayler's Creed (Bus possible).
Dinner: Homestead Restaurant Dinwiddie Ct. House (Home of Winfield Scott).
Speaker: Closing Comments: Chris Calkins

Sunday, September 27th

Appomattox Court House
(Optional)

Send Reservations & checks to:

Joe Tirpak

7239 Maple Street

Mentor OH 44060

Reservation Fee: \$55.00

A SAD TURN OF EVENTS.

-Old Soldiers Forced To Beg
you wouldn't like to see
such a sight.

SO

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\$35**

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P.O. BOX 18900

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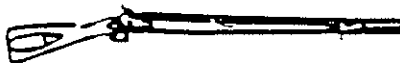
Please Make Reservation

OR, even better yet,
bring it to this coming meeting.

Funds in our depleted treasury are needed to cover
expenses for our speakers and for printing and mailing.

(To those who have paid your dues, THANKS
and march proudly in the front rank.)

Please call Kevin Callahan
932-9860 or 363-6048.
RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST!



Dr. Mudd's Conviction Will Stand, Army Says

DETROIT, July 25 (AP) — Rejecting the recommendation of a military board, the Army has decided that Samuel A. Mudd, the doctor who set John Wilkes Booth's broken leg in the hours after Lincoln's assassination, will continue to stand convicted as a co-conspirator in the President's slaying.

The decision is only the latest in a long series of setbacks for Mudd's descendants, who have been trying for 75 years to prove that he was an innocent man wrongly convicted by a military court amid hysteria that followed the assassination.

Twenty of those descendants appeared at a daylong hearing in Wash-

ington last January before a five-member panel of the Army Board for Correction of Military Records. The board later recommended that the conviction be reversed, partly on the basis of the evidence but largely because the panel questioned the military court's jurisdiction over Mudd, a civilian.

But the service's decision, issued Wednesday by William D. Clark, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army, said the records board itself had strayed beyond its jurisdiction.

"It is not the role of the A.B.C.M.R. to settle historical disputes," Mr. Clark wrote.

"Neither is the A.B.C.M.R. an appel-

late court. The precise issue which the A.B.C.M.R. proposes to decide, the jurisdiction of the military command over Dr. Mudd, was specifically addressed at the time in two separate habeas corpus proceedings."

The Mudd descendants' 91-year-old patriarch, Dr. Richard Mudd of Saginaw, 90 miles northwest of here, said in a telephone interview: "I am devastated and I am shocked, and so are the 505 descendants. I guess we're going to appeal. I don't know what else to do."

But Candida Ewing Steel, the descendants' lawyer and great-great-granddaughter of Gen. Thomas Ewing Jr., who was the defense lawyer for Samuel Mudd, said she was uncertain where such an appeal could be filed.

Booth shot Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington on April 14, 1865, and then leaped from the President's box to the stage. He fell onto the stage, breaking his leg, after being snared in bunting that lined the box. Booth and an accomplice fled on horseback, stopping before dawn the next morning at Mudd's Maryland farmhouse, where the doctor set Booth's leg in a splint and put him to bed.

Arrested nine days later, Mudd said that far from having taken part in a conspiracy to kill the President, he did not even know of the assassination when Booth arrived and would not have recognized Booth as the assassin. Mudd escaped the gallows and vote and was sentenced to life in p-

Civil War movie Ohioan's chance to be in pictures

by HOLLACE SILBIGER
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Laurence Yohey of Cleveland will be fighting amid blasting guns and bloody hand-to-hand combat next week.

But only in the movies.

Yohey, 44, will take a vacation from his dispatcher job at Cleveland's Emergency Medical Service to film "The Killer Angels," a Civil War television movie. He will be one of about 100 Ohioans playing Union soldiers in a scene being filmed in Gettysburg, Pa., Aug. 16 through 22.

"It will be great to stand in the same spot as the Union soldiers," said Yohey. "I'll see the same sight they saw — 30,000 Confederates running down your throat. I think it'll be pretty thrilling."

The movie, based on a book by Michael Shaara, tells the story of the Battle of Gettysburg. The four-hour miniseries will air in July 1993 on Turner Network Television in honor of the battle's 130th anniversary.

Yohey will be in a scene depicting Pickett's Charge, the Confederate Army's suicidal assault on the Union line, causing about 43,000 deaths.

Often considered the war's turning point, it was the Union army's first clear-cut victory.

The movie stars Martin Sheen as Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee; Richard Jordan as Confederate Gen. Lewis Armistead; Tom Berenger as Confederate Gen. James Longstreet; and Stephen Lang as Confederate

Gen. George E. Pickett.

"I wouldn't mind meeting them all," Yohey said.

And he just might. He found out about the movie when he joined the Fifth Ohio Volunteer Militia four months ago. The 5-year-old group travels the country re-enacting the military life of the actual Union Army's Fifth Ohio Company H.

Next week's filming will feature nine Ohio re-enactment groups, said Cheryl Russo, the movie's re-enactment coordinator. Several thousand re-enactors throughout the country applied to be in the movie.

"We rejected many we felt were not authentic enough," Russo said. "Some of our best people are from Ohio."

Yohey has been working at looking like an authentic Civil War soldier. He has let his hair and sideburns grow longer and has spent about \$1,000 on mail-ordering his costume — a musket rifle, wool coat and pants, tin plate and cup and shoes.

"The shoes have wooden pegs in them," Yohey said. "I don't know how they walked back then."

Yohey's only acting experience has been local commercials for EMS, but he plans on auditioning for a speaking part when he gets to Gettysburg.

"What the heck," Yohey said. "It won't hurt. It's a once-in-a-lifetime deal."

He will be joined by other Cleveland-area re-enactors, including Larry Foote of Brunswick.

"It will be something special," said Foote, a machine assembler for Van Dorn Plastic Machinery Co. in



Strongsville. "It will be great to retrace the steps of guys that went before us. It will be an honor to do them justice."

The re-enactors will be sleeping and eating at a campsite identical to the one the Union soldiers called home. But the outside world won't be too far away.

"We may cheat," said Foote, 55. "Hide a cooler in the tent with Pepsi and maybe a six-pack."

From The Cleveland Plain Dealer

OUR THANKS TO PAT MORAN

MORE THAN YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT

HENRY WIRZ

(1823-1865)



Heinrich Hartmann Wirz, born in Zurich, Switzerland in 1823, was the son of a tailor. In 1865 in America, Wirz was to claim, "I am by profession a physician," but he had no medical training. His father had insisted he abandon his interest in medical study to enter business. In the late 1840's Wirz served a short prison term, but accounts fail to tell of his offense except that "it had to do with money." In 1849 he sailed to America where he worked in a factory in Lawrence, Mass. He was then employed as a doctor's assistant around Kentucky, but failed in efforts to set up a practice for himself. He drifted to Louisiana and was employed on a plantation as "Dr. Wirz."

In 1861 he enlisted in the 4th Louisiana Infantry, which soon saw duty in Virginia. On May 31, 1862, during the battle of Seven Pines, Wirz, a sergeant, suffered an incurable wound to his right arm. He lost use of the arm and was in pain the few remaining years of his life. Promoted to captain, he was assigned to the staff of Brig. Gen. John H. Winder, who put him in command of the Richmond Military prison. Called "Dutch Sergeant" by prisoners, he was said to be the "essence of authority," "a good fellow at times and a very bad one at other times," and "an infallible dog" who "thought himself omnipresent and omniscient."

In December, 1862, Wirz went to Europe on a mission for President Jefferson Davis. He returned February 1864 and in March was sent as commandant to the prison at Andersonville, Georgia. Conditions there were terrible almost beyond description, and in the North Wirz was considered to be the "Monster...the fiend" responsible. One prisoner described him as "a most savage looking man, and who was as brutal as his looks would seem to indicate." A Massachusetts artilleryman asserted that when he arrived at Andersonville, Wirz forced him and the other prisoners in his unit to stand in line while he strolled back and forth in front of them waving a huge pistol and shouting in his thick accent, "What'd you come down here for? First got-dam man that falls out of line I blow him to hell. I make you wish you stay at home!" His accent, his foreign birth, his temper, and the miserable conditions of his camp all combined to make Wirz a hated and marked man. Many a prisoner under his rule vowed to take vengeance on him if ever the War came to an end.

In May 1865 Wirz was sending the last prisoners north when Federal Capt. Henry E. Noyes arrested him. The captive protested that conditions at Andersonville were beyond his control and pleaded to be allowed to take his family to Europe; instead, he was taken to Washington and charged with "impairing the health and destroying the lives of prisoners,"

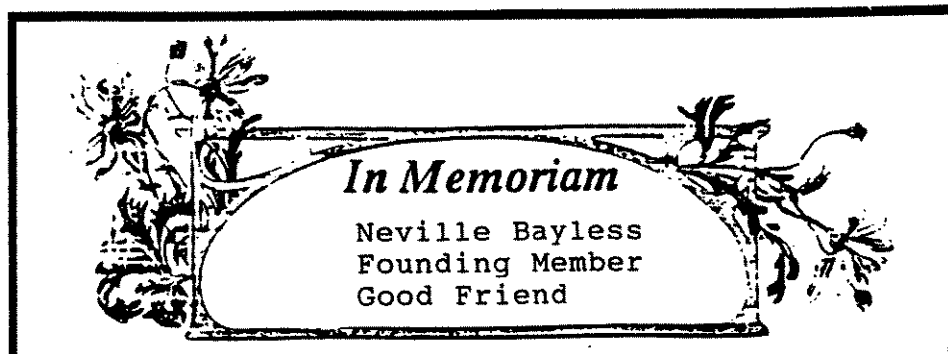
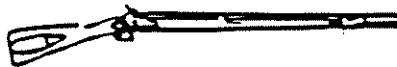
and with "murder in violation of the laws and customs of war." Brought before a military tribunal, for the next 63 days 148 witnesses told of Wirz's misdeeds. Wirz's trial that summer was flawed. Some witnesses swore that they had seen Wirz "strike, kick, and shoot prisoners in August 1864," a time during which the commandant was absent from the prison on sick leave. Prosecutors manipulated evidence to suit their case, and the defense was denied motion after motion. The press sensationalized the trial calling Wirz "the Andersonville savage", "the inhuman wretch", and "the infamous Captain." Wirz repeatedly protested that he was merely a soldier carrying out orders in a dire situation. One of his own prisoners would later concede: "He might have commanded a company well, and possibly a regiment, but thirty thousand men got away from him. He was at sea in their management." The outcome of Wirz's trial was never in doubt from the moment it began. On November 6, 1865 he was condemned to death, guilty on all charges,

President Johnson received several pleas to spare Henry Wirz's life, including one from the consul general of Wirz's native Switzerland. Wirz "was only the detestable tool of monsters in human form," the diplomat asserted. "Shall the hand suffer for the arm that wielded it?" A secret emissary from the war Department offered Wirz a reprieve in exchange for a statement that would convict Jefferson Davis of conspiracy to murder prisoners. Wirz calmly answered, "Jefferson Davis had no connection with me as to what was done at Andersonville."

On November 10, 1865 he was taken into the yard at Old Capitol Prison and with the Capitol building in the background climbed the scaffold. After the court's orders were read aloud, he turned to the officer in charge of the execution and said, "I know what orders are, Major, I am being hanged for obeying them." Wirz maintained his innocence to the end. "I go before my God," he declared, "and He will judge between me and you." With reporters flocked around the scaffold, spectators perched in nearby trees, and the soldiers lining the prison's walls chanting over and over again, "Andersonville, Andersonville," the noose was placed over Wirz's head and the trap dropped.

Henry Wirz was the only Confederate to be executed for war crimes. He was buried in the yard of the Washington Arsenal, alongside the four conspirators hanged earlier that year for their roles in the assassination of President Lincoln.

--- Encyclopedia of the Civil War ed. Patricia Faust
--- TimeLife Books Tenting Tonight by James I. Robertson
The Nation Reunited by Richard W. Murphy

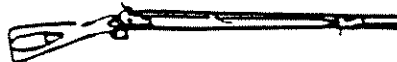


SCENES I'D LIKE TO HAVE SEEN



On the sweltering afternoon of July 30, 1864, as the Union Infantry of General Burnside's IX Corps was pinned down in the dust and smoke of the Crater, the need for water had reached a critical proportion. A private from the 6th New Hampshire approached General Griffin for permission to fetch water. The crossfire from Colquitt's and McAfee's infantry and Wright's artillery made it almost certain death to traverse the slope behind the Crater, but Griffin told the man he could try if he took enough canteens to make it worth the hazard. As he watched the fellow bound onto the bullet-swept plain laden with dry canteens, the General thought he might not return if he once landed safely in the old trenches. His courage would probably fail then, Griffin surmised, and he could hardly blame him. It was with a good deal of surprise that the General saw the man lumber back across the wasteland with all his canteens filled. Bullets perforated a couple of them, but that mishap simply lightened his burden and propelled him faster. He waddled almost comically past the bodies of the dead, finally clambering up the rear slope of the Crater and flinging himself inside.

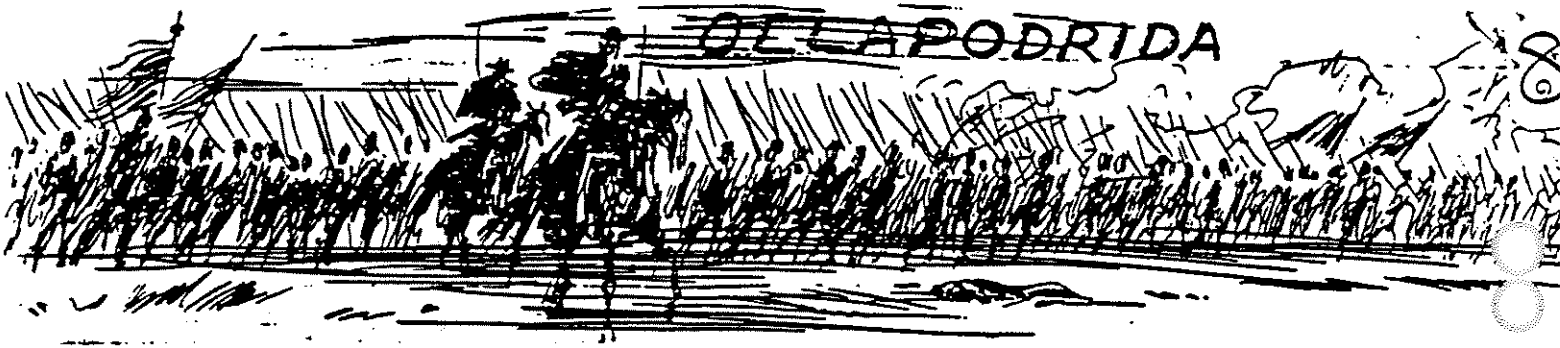
from The Petersburg Campaign. The Battle of the Crater: "the Horrid Pit". by Cavanaugh & Marvel pp 96
Illustrated by Stu Cramer



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MUST!





In late 1864-1865, desertion had reached crisis proportion within the Army of Northern Virginia besieged at Petersburg. The traffic in the opposite direction, while not at the same level, was not insignificant. The 5th New Hampshire seemed especially prone to deserters, or at least was the butt of most stories about them. A New York artilleryman remembered, "the chaffing across the lines which occurred every day about dusk [when] the rebels called on us to send over the flag and the colonel to command the regiment, as the greater part of it had come over to them." Another time, a new Federal unit moved up onto the picket line, and someone called out to the rebels on the other side, "What regiment is that over there?" Back came the answer, "The Fifth New Hampshire!"

— The Last Citadel by Noah Andre Trudeau pp 295

On May 19, 1864, a few miles west of Salem Church, an attack by Confederate cavalry was made on the force guarding the Army of the Potomac's supply train. As the two Union cavalry regiments were pushed back by the Confederates, the call went back for infantry supports. The 30th U.S.C.T. (United States Colored Troops) of Gen. Edward Ferrero's brigade came up on the run and was quickly spread into skirmishing order. The white major in charge sought to steady his men who had never been in combat before. "Just imagine you are hunting for coons," he yelled, "and keep your eyes open." A few minutes later as the rebel bullets whistled by, a voice drawled out of the ranks, " 'Pears like 'twas de coons doin' de huntin' dis time."

— Bloody Roads South by Noah Andre Trudeau pp 209

During his expedition to destroy the Weldon Railroad, General Warren's column had to cross the Nottoway River. Gen. Crawford's division arrived at the river at 11:00pm. There was some confusion as when Crawford should cross. A few Units stood by for hours expecting to cross, even though it had already been decided at headquarters that they would not move farther that night. In the 190th Pennsylvania, several soldiers fell asleep while waiting. One practical-joking lieutenant roused a group of snoring men to tell them they could sleep until 2:00am when the march would resume.

"Well, what the hell did you wake us up for, to tell us that?" someone yelled.

"Why, you damn lunatic," the smiling lieutenant replied, "aren't two sleeps better than one?"

— The Last Citadel by Noah Andre Trudeau pp 268

from The President's Desk



Gentlemen:

I look forward to an exciting 1992-1993 year for the Civil War Round Table. We are very fortunate to have an excellent agenda of speakers for our upcoming meetings.

It is with great sorrow that I must tell you of the passing of one of our charter members, Mr. Neville Bayless. Neville was a true intellectual, and knew the war well, particularly the valley campaign of Stonewall Jackson. I have sent a letter of condolence to Mrs. Bayless in the name of the Round Table.

The Hermit Club has graciously allowed us to take the upstairs room at no extra charge, starting in October. This will allow us to accommodate larger crowds and have a much nicer atmosphere for our meetings in the future.

I hope to see everyone at the upcoming September meeting.

Sincerely,

Kevin R. Callahan
President

WE NEED TO UPDATE OUR MEMBERSHIP LIST

PLEASE PRINT

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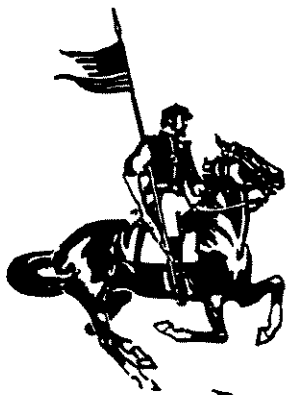
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THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
P.O. BOX 18900
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44118

Kevin Callahan
21149 Colby
Shaker Hts., OH 44122

