



THE CHARGER

THE CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

September 2026

CCWRT Founded 1956

Vol. 51, No. 2

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SPEAKER—John Banks, historian, author, and journalist, is co-host of “The Antietam and Beyond Podcast,” secretary-treasurer of The Center for Civil War Photography, and the writer of numerous articles and at least three books on Civil War history, including *A Civil War Road Trip of a Lifetime: Antietam, Gettysburg, and Beyond*.

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 7:30 PM

For reservations email: ccwrtreserve@gmail.com. To ensure dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

Website: <http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

Like us on Facebook!

MEETING – September 9, 2026

PROGRAM – “A Civil War Road Trip of a Lifetime”

President's Message

A Battle Cry Worth Celebrating

Members of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable:

There are moments in the life of an organization when it is proper and fitting that we pause and celebrate the journey that this organization has made. This is certainly one of those moments for the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

I am delighted to share the wonderful news that the **Cleveland Civil War Roundtable has been named the 2026 Civil War Roundtable of the Year by Emerging Civil War**. This is an extraordinary honor, and one that belongs to every member of our Roundtable, those present with us today and those that came before us. It reflects not simply what we have accomplished during the past years, but the enthusiasm, fellowship, scholarship, and dedication that have defined this organization since its inception in 1956.

Our theme for this year, "**Battle Cry of Freedom**," provides a fitting framework through which to view this recognition. The phrase was an original song published in 1862 by George Frederick Root in response for President Lincoln's call for 300,000 troops to put down the rebellion. The lyrics helped to inspire morale throughout the North. The powerful message inspired Americans to fight, sacrifice and ultimately transform this nation from a mostly agrarian society to an industrial powerhouse. But freedom is not simply a subject confined to the pages of history. It is an idea that has continued to challenge and inspire generations—and it reminds us of the importance of preserving the history of those who fought to define what freedom would mean.

In our own way, the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable has answered its own **Battle Cry of Freedom**. For more than six decades, we have brought people together to study the Civil War,

to ask difficult questions, to learn from outstanding historians, and to keep alive the stories of the men and women who experienced America's greatest crisis.

Oftentimes as a high school history teacher, I hear students remark that history does not matter. I am constantly reminded by our organization that our work does matter. Preserving the stories and history of the Civil War is our song lyric, the same lyric that was shouted by so many Americans. History does not come along with a save button that saves it automatically to our devices. It survives because people care enough to remember it, study it, debate it, and share it with others. We continue to contribute to this memory because our organization cares enough to remember the Civil War, to study it, debate it, and share it with others. Every speaker's passion about their stories, every member who asks a question or discusses a book or travels to battlefields continues to be part of our own legacy and history as an organization.

And so, as we begin the 2026-2027 program, I hope we will take a moment to appreciate what this award represents. **Emerging Civil War has recognized the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable because of the energy and commitment of its members**. It is a reminder of the remarkable community we have built together, and I am honored to be a member. Our "Battle Cry of Freedom" is more than the events of 1861-1865. It is why we continue to understand the past and appreciate the sacrifices of those who lived through this period, and to ensure that the lessons of the Civil War remain part of our conversations.

Congratulations to all of you on this well-deserved recognition. I am proud to serve as your president, and even prouder to be part of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable.

Now, let us answer the call once again. *"As we will welcome to our numbers the loyal, true and brave, shouting the battle cry of Freedom; And although*

*they may be poor, Not a man shall be
a slave, Shouting the battle cry of
Freedom “*

I look forward to seeing everyone at our
September meeting and to another memorable
year together.

John Syrone
President
Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

CCWRT Dispatches



THE CCWRT 2026 FIELD TRIP

The CCWRT 2026 Field Trip will be
September 17-20, 2026. We will be
traveling to the Shenandoah Valley to study
the 1862 Valley Campaign. Check the
CCWRT website and your CCWRT emails
for details and registration information.

****CCWRT MEETINGS DINNER COST INCREASE FOR 2026-2027***

Due to rising food costs, the Holiday Inn has periodically raised dinner costs to the Roundtable since we began meeting there in 2021. Most of these costs have been absorbed by the Roundtable, and we have been able to keep the dinner charges to members unchanged since 2019 when we met at Judson Manor. While that charge to members has remained steady, we have run monthly deficits to keep the meal cost at \$35.00. For the past year the Executive Committee has focused on these costs and has taken proactive steps to minimize these deficits including menu selections, Holiday Buffet elimination, and recouping dinner costs from last-day member cancellations. While this has had a positive impact, we continue to face deficits that do not allow us to balance our costs. As a result, the Executive Committee has agreed to raise the dinner charge from \$35.00 to \$40.00 effective with the start of this program year beginning September 2026. Additionally, we likely would need to charge an additional fee for special occasions such as the Holiday Buffet should we wish to reinstate it. Should that be the case, it would be announced in advance. We believe this step is necessary to maintain our financial health while providing beneficial programs for our Roundtable.

CCWRT HEADGEAR FOR SALE

Back by popular demand is the next generation of CCWRT hats! We have ordered a limited number of these new hats and will make them available at our September 9th meeting. Priced at \$30.00 each they'll make a great addition to your Roundtable swag. If interested, please

provide cash or check payable to the CCWRT. Depending on demand, we can also order additional hats.



The Editor's Desk



SUMMER 1966-my sister, Ellen, and her fiancé, Jim Flanigan, decided to take a road trip to Gettysburg. Knowing how much her little

brother loved history, especially Civil War history, they asked me to go with them. Of course I was quite excited, and so one day that summer I made my first Civil War road trip with my sister, her fiancé, and our older sister, Ann (who, I suppose, came along to keep me out of trouble). It was a day trip, and we left bright and early in the morning, just around sunrise. Jim's silver-gray Bel Aire, complete with huge horizontal tail fins, was loaded with the four of us, a picnic lunch, and an old metal ice chest. There were a lot of firsts for me that day. I was nine years old, and I rode a car on the PA Turnpike for the first time, and, more memorable for me, I rode through my first tunnel. Not just one tunnel, mind you, but a series of at least five or six tunnels cutting through the mountain ridges separating western Pennsylvania from the rolling farmland of Adams County. The day is a blur in my mind. I remember seeing the Electric Map exhibit at the Gettysburg National Museum. We passed the Charlie Weaver Civil War Museum. I saw my first Civil War cannons. In the National Museum I was awed by the exhibits of uniforms, sabers, pistols, rifles, muskets, saddles, camp equipment, bullet and shell riddled tree trunks, etc. Even at nine years old, I could sense the energy from the past that permeated the building. Jim drove us around the battlefield. I didn't understand all the details then, but images of Little Round Top, Devil's Den, Culp's Hill, Spangler's Spring, the Peach Orchard, and the Wheatfield were seared into my memory. Of course, the statues and monuments brought the whole battlefield to life for me. I remember eating our picnic lunch on the CSA side of the field. Jim and Ellen slipped away for some time alone. I remember seeing the picture that Jim took of Ellen sitting on one of the stone walls. In the meantime, Ann and I explored the area around the picnic grounds. We were on the edge of Eisenhower's Farm. There was a little shed with a CSA flag hanging from the front and a large sign claiming that we were standing in front of the spot that served as General Longstreet's headquarters. Well, who knows?

At any rate the flag made a deep impression, and I excitedly told Jim and Ellen about my discovery. Eventually we made our way to Cemetery Ridge and the High-Water Mark. If I remember little else about the Electric Map show, I was impressed by the story of Pickett's Charge. Now, I stood and looked out across the legendary field, seeing Lee's statue in the distance, for the first time. If you ask Jim about the trip that day, he will tell you two stories about me. First, as we drove along the Turnpike, he would announce an upcoming tunnel, immediately feeling his seat being pulled back as an eager young nine-year-old in the backseat grabbed it to maneuver himself to get a better view of the tunnel entrance (there were no seatbelts back then, at least not in most cars). Finally, he will picture for you a young boy standing on Cemetery Ridge, looking across Pickett's Field towards the Confederate lines, with his hands on his hips, surveying the battlefield like he was General Meade himself!

~Kent Fonner



Some Notes on Civil War Sites

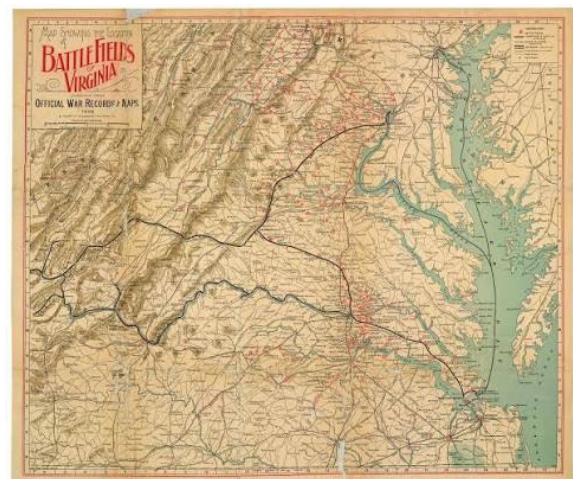
The National Park Service maintains 17 Civil War sites. The first was the Chickamauga and

Chattanooga National Military Park created in 1890, a year after a joint North and South veterans' re-union barbeque at the Chickamauga battlefield.

For more information to plan your own Civil War road trip and the public history of the preserved battlefields, SEE "10 Facts: The Birth of National Battlefield Parks": American Battlefield Trust: <https://www.battlefields.org>; and

Virtual Battlefield Tours/American Battlefield Trust: <https://www.battlefields.org/visit/virtual-tours>.

The state with the most Civil War battlefields is Virginia: 160. *



*During my initial youthful interest in the Civil War, I persuaded my family as part of a summer vacation to tour several of them. My field trip when I was the CCWRT President was to several battlefields (and other Civil War-related sites) around Richmond.

~Dennis Keating



“Angel’s Glow” at the Battle of Shiloh

By Brian D. Kowell © June 2026

A friend of mine recently sent me an email with a link to an article published in *Popular Mechanics*. Authored by Elizabeth Rayne, the article was titled “Hundreds of Civil War Soldiers Were Destined to Die: Then Their Wounds Started Glowing.” While I possess limited mechanical ability (and I mean limited), the article intrigued me as I had never heard of this before. I was hooked and needed to know more.

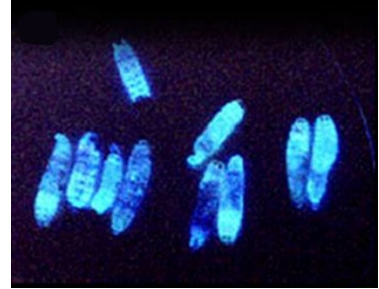
Ms. Rayne described how over 16,000 soldiers lay wounded through the ravines, woodlands, and fields of the Shiloh battlefield. They lay where they had fallen that day in April 1862, shivering through a cold and rainy night before medical help could arrive.

When physicians reached the scene that night, they were taken aback by eerie, bluish lights that glowed in the darkness. Upon closer examination they discovered that the bluish lights were coming from some of the soldiers’ gaping wounds. They couldn’t explain it, but as time went by, it was noticed: “Even more strangely, the soldiers who had these eerie glowing wounds wound up having more of a fighting chance to survive.” Some began to believe that it was Divine Intervention and called the phenomenon “Angel’s Glow.”

It took until 2001 to get an explanation. Turns out two Maryland high school students by the names of Bill Martin and Jon Curtis learned about “Angel’s Glow” in their history class and decided to investigate. Luckily Jon’s mother was a biochemist.

They discovered that the glow came from bioluminescent bacteria named *Photorhabdus luminescens* that had invaded the soldiers’ wounds. Having a degree in biology, I was intrigued.

This bacterium lives symbiotically inside nematodes (flatworms) on the ground where they are taken up by insects. Once inside the insect, the bacteria secrete toxins and enzymes that are lethal to the insect causing the insect to die and decompose so both the bacteria and nematodes can feed on the tissue of the decomposing carcass. The bacteria also produce another secretion that prevents other bacterial species from colonizing.



In other words, these last secretions likely prevented the wounded soldiers at Shiloh from succumbing to other infections or gangrene. Civil War surgeons had no way of knowing that the bluish glow they saw was a result of infected insects (flies and mosquitoes) being attracted to the smell of blood and landing on open wounds, spreading bioluminescent bacteria that would disinfect the wounds.

Why isn't this seen more frequently in humans? Was this seen on any other Civil War battlefield? The two young scientists showed that *P. luminescens* is not able to survive at average human body temperature. For those shivering and wet soldiers lying on the damp, clammy ground in the cold and rain, they became hypothermic, making it possible for the disinfecting bacteria to survive.

The bluish glow is a product of the *lux* operon – a cluster of genes that work together to produce the proteins responsible for the light emission.

So far, this is the best explanation for “Angel’s Glow” saving soldiers’ lives at Shiloh.

This author has only read one other instance of “Angel’s Glow” during the Civil War. It was in the aftermath of the Battle of Cedar Mountain on August 9, 1862. The 6th Wisconsin Infantry arrived after the battle and established their camps that evening on the corpse strewn battlefield. While making the rounds that evening, Sgt. John Johnson encountered a badly shaken Pvt. Dennis Kelly on picket. “Sergeant,” Kelly told Johnson, “I have seen ghosts of spirits.” Johnson knew Kelly was a steady, young fellow who was well known for telling the truth. Kelly pointed out the direction of the “spirits” and Johnson told Kelly he would investigate the case. Johnson followed the course and discovered a dead body “interred very shallow, and a phosphorescent light oscillating from the head to the foot of the corpse. And so, it proved in every instance” in other decaying bodies who were exposed from hasty burials. It was a warm, sultry night and Johnson guessed that the reason for the light was due to some gas from the slightly covered decaying corpses.

But is this true? If you search for results about “Angel’s Glow” you get nothing that dates back further than 2001. According to author Kelly Grooms in her July 11, 2024 article in *Promega Connections* titled “The Battle of Shiloh’s Angel Glow: Fact, Civil War Legend, or Modern Myth,” she argues that “Angel’s Glow” is a myth. She supports her argument with a statement on the Shiloh National Military Park Facebook page which says that with over 2,000 contemporary accounts of the Battle of Shiloh, including all of the surgeons’ reports in the park’s archives, there is not a single mention of glowing wounds. It is hard to imagine that anyone who had witnessed this phenomenon firsthand would not write about it. So, while “Angel’s Glow” is

scientifically possible, its occurrence on the Shiloh battlefield is highly improbable. It is even more improbable on the Cedar Mountain battlefield as the temperatures on August 9-10 were in the 90's and lows in the 80's so theoretically the bacteria would be unable to survive. It is a good myth, but another example of not letting the truth get in the way of a good story.

Sources:

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Hanna, Ella, "The Angel's Glow," Bossier City, Louisiana, Museum of the Confederacy. [The-Angel-Glow-Shiloh.pdf](#)

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Medical Discovery News, "Glowing Wounds," University of Texas Medical Branch, December 21, 2018. [Glowing Wounds - Medical Discovery News - UTMB](#)

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Statement from Shiloh National Military Park Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ShilohNMP/photos/a.112884892134839/567562260000431/?type=3>

 [Misinformation Monday:... - Shiloh National Military Park | Facebook](#)

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Noe, Kenneth W., *The Howling Storm: Weather, Climate, and the American Civil War*, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2020, p. 167.

Krick, Robert K., *Civil War Weather in Virginia*, Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2007, p. 65.



CCWRT President John Syrone Accepts Award
From Emerging Civil War Editor-in-Chief Neil Chatelain

Cleveland Civil War Roundtable Named 2026 Civil War Round Table of the Year

Emerging Civil War (ECW) is an organization that provides a national platform for sharing original scholarship related to the American Civil War. ECW is the collaborative effort of more than 35 historians who are committed to sharing the story of the Civil War in a way that is accessible for the general public. ECW's initiatives include its award-winning series of books published by Savas Beatie, LLC; an annual symposium; a speakers' bureau; and a daily blog (www.emergingcivilwar.com). ECW announced on January 30, 2026, that it was sponsoring a Civil War Round Table of the Year Award for 2026 and that all Civil War roundtables were invited to submit nominations for that award. In its announcement, ECW stated that the award is to cover the previous calendar year, and ECW listed several criteria for the award. These criteria included meetings, membership, external education initiatives, external preservation initiatives, and ECW participation. The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, with input from several members of the Executive Committee, wrote a nomination for the award and submitted it for consideration.

[Our Roundtable's nomination is available on our website at <https://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/CCWRT-Roundtable-of-the-Year-Nomination.pdf>.]

After reviewing the nominations, ECW selected the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable as the 2026 Civil War Round Table of the Year. In its announcement of this decision, ECW noted that while many Civil War roundtables in the country are decreasing in membership, our Roundtable has had a robust increase in membership of 25% per year in recent years, and we routinely have between 70 and 120 attendees at our monthly meetings. ECW also indicated that our Roundtable has an annual field trip to a Civil War site and invites members of other Civil War roundtables to participate, which is an effective way to foster camaraderie between different roundtables.

ECW also noted that in 2025 our Roundtable organized a week-long program that featured living historian Dr. Curt Fields, the nation's preeminent portrayer of Ulysses S. Grant. This program included several presentations by Dr. Fields at schools and at evening venues, and it involved over 1,300 students and over 450 community members through Dr. Fields' lectures. Also discussed in ECW's announcement of the award is the participation of our Roundtable in the annual National History Day competition, where members help students by acting as judges for the students' projects. In addition, our Roundtable sponsors our own awards to National History Day students for exemplary projects related to the Civil War. ECW said that activities such as these demonstrate that our Roundtable extends beyond our meetings to community programs that expand knowledge of the Civil War across the city.

ECW concluded its announcement by stating that our Roundtable has shown that it is possible nowadays for Civil War roundtables not just to survive, but to thrive via engaging meetings, community outreach, and an astute and wide-ranging perspective.

We are extremely grateful to ECW for giving this award to our organization and thrilled that our Roundtable has been so recognized. Being named the 2026 Civil War Round Table of the Year is a tremendous honor and a powerful affirmation of the purpose and dedication that define our organization. Our collective efforts have long reflected a standard of excellence, and it is gratifying that what we do as an organization has been nationally recognized.

What makes this moment especially profound is that it represents far more than a single submission. This award reflects years of sustained commitment to strong programming, meaningful engagement, and the preservation and thoughtful interpretation of Civil War history. This distinction meaningfully elevates our Roundtable within the broader Civil War community, and it is something we should carry with pride, not only as acknowledgment of past efforts, but also as inspiration for the future.

Congratulations to every member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable. Each of you has played a part in shaping an organization that is respected, valued, and now nationally recognized for its contributions. This is a collective accomplishment and a testament to the passion, care, and devotion that characterize our organization. To every member of our Roundtable as we begin the 2026-2027 meetings, welcome to the Civil War Round Table of the Year.



A U.S. Battery of Horse Artillery

***“Always Ready, Always Willing:” Battery M, Second U.S. Artillery’s
Finest Day***

By Brian D. Kowell

Battery M, Second U.S. Artillery was a versatile and active unit that served continuously throughout the Civil War in the Army of the Potomac. As a horse-artillery unit, its mobility allowed it to act as a crucial support element for cavalry. It distinguished itself on numerous battlefields. Historian Fairfax Downey said it was “One of the best Union horse artillery batteries in the service.”¹

Battery M was created as part of an artillery expansion for the Mexican-American war. It got off to an inauspicious start. Authorized by Congress on March 1847, its organization was too late for active service in that war. Capt. John F. Roland was the unit’s first commanding officer. Dying of Yellow Fever while in Charleton, S.C., Roland was replaced on September 28, 1852 by Capt. Henry Jackson Hunt.

March, 1860, found Hunt and battery M stationed at Ft. Brown, Texas. When the sectional crisis started and Texas newly seceded from the Union, Texas department commander, Gen. David E. Twiggs said he would turn over all U.S. army troops to the Texans. While technically surrendered, Hunt would have none of that. Battery M got their guns to the mouth of the Rio Grande and, despite having to leave their horse, boarded with their guns the steamer *Daniel Webster* in late march and steamed for Ft. Hamilton, New York.²

Battery M participated in the Battle of 1st Bull Run. Following Bull Run, it was converted to horse-artillery. It would fight with the cavalry until the surrender at Appomattox.

In the reorganization before Gettysburg, Pennington and Battery M were assigned to Brig. Gen. H. Judson Kilpatrick's cavalry division's 2nd brigade. That brigade was commanded by newly minted Brig. Gen. George A. Custer. Both Kilpatrick and Custer had been classmates with Pennington at West Point.

Twenty-four-year-old Lt. Alexander Cummings McWhorter Pennington, Jr. [pictured] from New Jersey was transferred from Battery A to command Battery M. He graduated from United States Military Academy, Class of 1860. Ironically, due to a bureaucratic mix-up, he wasn't officially assigned or promoted to captain until November 1864, after he left the battery. Nonetheless, Pennington was "An aggressive, young commander who proved more than a match for [JEB] Stuart's finest 'Invincibles.'" He would lead Battery M with distinction.³



On July 3, east of Gettysburg, Battery M and Lt. Pennington had one of their finest days.

Battery M found itself supporting Custer's brigade at the intersection of the Hanover and Low Dutch Roads. Despite orders to rejoin Kilpatrick at Two Taverns, Brig. Gen. Gregg enlisted Custer to stay. Reports of increasing numbers of Confederate cavalry filing into the woods atop Cress Ridge almost a mile away caused Gregg to be concerned of the threat to the Union army's rear. As a result, Pennington unlimbered two sections of his guns northwest and one section southeast of Spangler's farmhouse on Hanover Road.

Soon emerging from the woods on Cress's Ridge were six Confederate cannon – four guns of Capt. Thomas E. Jackson's Charlottesville "Kanawha" Horse Artillery and a two-gun section from Capt. Charles Green's Louisiana Battery. Opening fire, they soon made it hot for Custer's command.⁴

Custer recognized that the enemy enjoyed the advantage of a higher position and would deliver a plunging fire. "The enemy had obtained the correct range," wrote Custer, "and was pouring shot and shell into my command with great accuracy . . . I ordered [Pennington] to silence the enemy's battery . . . notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy's [elevated] position."⁵

Major Henry B. McClellan never forgot how:

The first signs of [artillery] activity on the Federal side came from a battery near the house of Joseph Spangler. This was a fine horse battery M, 2nd United States artillery, consisting of six, 3-inch rifles and commanded by Lieutenant A.C.M. Pennington. The fire of these guns was the most accurate and effective. They came so fast and accurate that the first shot struck in the battery, and shot after shot came with such precision and rapidity that the battery was soon disabled and forced to seek shelter.⁶

One Yankee cavalryman observed:

Pennington had supreme accuracy standing beside his second gun directing a shot which struck a rebel gun squarely on the muzzle, rupturing the barrel, and dismounting it. . . the distance was three-fourths of a mile . . . his next shot struck a wheel hub, smashing the gun and killed the crew. The remainder of the battery retired.⁷

The artillery duel was one-sided. The inferior Confederate guns were no match for the superiority of Battery M.

Around this time, a group of mounted officers came out of the woods on Cress's Ridge. It was Gen. Stuart and his staff. Stuart wanted to assess Yankee strength. Pennington spotted the cluster of horsemen. It didn't take him long to send a shell screaming their way. As Frank Smith Robertson on JEB Stuart's staff told it: "The General and staff rode out of the woods to a cleared hill. A Yankee battery at the far end of the big clearing opened on us and we rode back again. The General disappeared and the staff seemed to scatter." The accurate fire of Battery M came close to eliminating the South's most famous cavalryman.⁸

Breathed's and McGregor's Confederate batteries soon arrived on Cress's Ridge after replenishing their caissons. They dropped trail near where Jackson's and Green's guns once stood and opened fire.⁹

Battery M replied to their new targets, and was soon joined by Battery E&G, 1st U.S. Artillery. Commanded by Capt. Alanson M. Randol, they dropped trail on the Low Dutch Road and joined in the counter-battery fire. One Yankee noticed that "Pennington replied with astonishing effect, for every shot [seemed to] hit the mark, and the opposing artillerists were unable to silence a single Union gun." According to Pennington salvo after salvo was directed at the Confederate guns and he eventually silenced them.¹⁰

From the woods on Cress's Ridge came row upon row of rebel horseman. Under Generals Wade Hampton and Fitz Lee, they formed to charge. Battery M opened on this new target from long range. In what turned out to be the final charge of the battle, "Pennington let loose a terrific storm of shot and shell, tearing whole ranks apart and leaving large gaps in the Confederate lines." As the Confederates drew closer, Pennington switched to canister and then double canister until Custer at the head of the 1st Michigan Cavalry formed in their front. As Custer and his Wolverines moved forward to meet charge with charge, Pennington's guns resumed firing, sending shells over their comrades' heads right up until the last minute when horsemen crashed

into horseman. Historian Edward Longacre opined that the Federal artillery wreaked havoc on General Wade Hampton's troops as they galloped across open plain until they closed with the Yankee horsemen.¹¹

The combination of the Yankee horsemen and artillery turned the tide and Hampton and Lee pulled back to the safety of Cress's Ridge. As they did so, Pennington's guns continued to throw shells into their backs and swept the ground until the gray horsemen disappeared. Pennington was said to have fired more than 240 rounds during the contest.¹²



Pennington Pictured with two other artillery officers

Praise was soon showered on Pennington and Battery M. General Gregg stated "The batteries commanded by Capt. A.M. Randol and Lieut. A.C.M. Pennington, Jr., rendered most effective service. The fire of the artillery during the engagement was the most accurate that I have ever seen." Historian Eric Wiitenberg would pen of Custer's comments, "but for Pennington we would have been licked in that fight and to . . . Pennington [and Battery M] the country owes the fortunate result of the Battle of Gettysburg." In his report of the Gettysburg Campaign, General Kilpatrick's final assessment of the conduct and service of Battery M and Pennington, he wrote:

"Pennington, always ready, always willing."¹³

¹ Downey, Fairfax, *The Guns of Gettysburg*, New York, David McKay Co., 1958, p. 163.

² Cutrer, Thomas W. and Smith, David Paul, *David E. Twiggs: Confederate General and U.S. Army Officer*, Texas State Historical Association, 1952, updated April 27, 2023. [Twiggs, David Emanuel](#) Morgan, *Always Ready*, p. 2.

³ Eicher, John H., and Eicher, David J., *Civil War High Commands*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 754. Morgan, *Always Ready*, p.13. Hunt, Roger D., & Brown, Jack R., *Brevet Brigadier Generals in Blue*, Gaithersburg, MD, Olde Soldier Books, Inc., 1997, p. 476. Longacre, Edward G., *The Cavalry at Gettysburg: A Tactical Study of Mounted Operations during the Civil War's Pivotal Campaign, 9 June – 14 July, 1863*, Rutherford, NJ, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press 1986, p.161-163.

⁴ Tucker, Phillip Thomas, *Custer at Gettysburg: A New Look at George Armstrong Custer versus Jeb Stuart the Battle's Climactic Cavalry Charge* in, Guilford, CT, Stackpole Books, 2019, p. 265. McClellan, Henry B., *I Rode with JEB Stuart: The Life and Campaigns of General J.E.B. Stuart*, New York, NY, Da Capo, 1994, p. 339. Gottfried, Bradley M., *The Artillery at Gettysburg*, Nashville, TN, Cumberland House, 2008, p. 235. Capt. Jackson's battery was composed of two 12-pounders and two 3-inch rifles and Green's section was composed of two 10-pounder Parrott rifles.

⁵ *O.R. Series 1, Vol XXVII, pt. 1*, pp. 1000-1001. Custers report. Kidd, James, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman*, Ionia, MI, Sentinel Printing Company, 1908, p.73.

⁶ McClellan, *I Rode with JEB Stuart*, p. 146

⁷ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*.

⁸ Trout, Robert J., *In the Saddle with Stuart: The Story of Frank Smith Robertson of Jeb Stuart's Staff*, Gaithersburg, PA, Thomas Publications, 1998, p. 80.

⁹ Tucker, *Custer at Gettysburg*, pp. 270-271. Breathed's battery had four 3-inch guns and McGregor's had two 12-pounders Napoleons and two 3-inch rifles.

¹⁰ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*. Hewitt, Janet B. et. Al., ed., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Vol. 5*, Wilmington, NC, Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1994-1998, p. 285.

¹¹ Kidd, *Personal Recollections*. Longacre, *Cavalry at Gettysburg*, pp. 228-229.

¹² Kidd, *Personal Recollections*. Gottfried, *Artillery at Gettysburg*, p. 235-238.

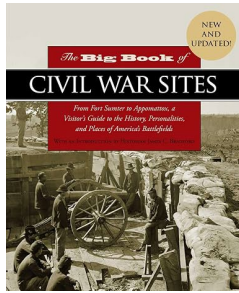
¹³ *O.R. Series 1, Vol. XXVII, pt 1*, p. 957. Gregg's report dated July 25, 1863. Wittenberg, Eric, *Protecting Flank at Gettysburg: The Battles for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field, July 2-3, 1863*the, El Dorado, CA, Savas Beatie, 2013, p. 40. *O.R. Series 1, Vol XXVII, pt1*, p. 994. Kilpatrick's report.



Light artillery battery coming into action. While horse artillery moved with all cannoneers mounted on horseback, light artillery moved with the gun crews either riding the limbers and the caissons or marching on foot with the guns.

Horse artillery was, therefore, best suited to accompany cavalry.

BOOK REVIEWS



John McKay, Eric Ethier, and Cynthia Parzych, *The Big Book of Civil War Sites: From Fort Sumter to Appomattox, a Visitor's Guide to the History, Personalities, and Places of America's Battlefields* (with an Introduction by Historian James C. Bradford), Indexed (Lyons Press: Essex, CT, originally published 2011, new and updated edition 2023) ISBN 975-1-4930-7202-6.

The Big Book of Civil War Sites is an exceptional, comprehensive travel guide that serves as an indispensable resource for history enthusiasts, casual tourists, and dedicated Civil War travelers alike. This 422-page volume functions perfectly as both an authoritative reference handbook and a practical roadside companion. The book stands out for its meticulous organization, rich historical context, and immense practical utility.

The volume lives up to its "Big Book" title, presenting expansive geographic coverage. The authors meticulously chart battlegrounds, monuments, and historic landmarks across both the Eastern theater of the war and the Western/Southern states. Rather than limiting the scope to large-scale battles like Gettysburg or Antietam, the guide gives equal weight to pivotal Southern campaigns across North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana. It handles everything from the opening guns at Fort Sumter to the final surrender at Appomattox Court House with balanced detail.

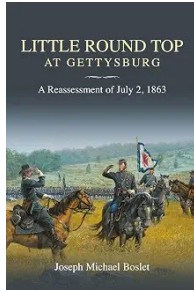
The book avoids the dry formatting of a standard encyclopedia by seamlessly weaving practical logistics with narrative history. Key features of the guide include:

- **Rich Historical Overviews:** Each section begins with detailed accounts of the military strategies, specific battle phases, and the key civic and military leaders who shaped the events.
- **Visual Anchors:** The pages are brought to life with full-color photographs and clear, illustrative battlefield maps that help readers visualize troop movements.
- **On-the-Ground Logistics:** Beyond history, it provides comprehensive visitor data, including local museum locations, available guided tours, driving directions to hard-to-find sites, and annual historical events.
- **Traveler Amenities:** It features highly useful local listings for regional lodging, historical inns, dining, and shopping to make trip planning effortless.
- **Educational Reference:** A built-in glossary of Civil War-era terminology ensures that terms like "brevet" or "redoubt" are easily understood by lay readers.

One author, John McKay, injects the text with a deeply authentic flavor. A military historian, former teacher, and U.S. Army veteran, McKay also carries deep personal ties to the conflict—his great-grandfathers were Confederate veterans. This combination of formal training and ancestral roots gives the book a balanced, objective, yet deeply respectful tone toward the immense human cost of the war. His passion for preserving tangible history is evident in how carefully the book directs travelers away from mainstream tourist traps and toward pristine, lesser-known earthworks and skirmish sites.

The Big Book of Civil War Sites is a masterfully compiled, user-friendly guide that bridges the gap between historical scholarship and active tourism. It turns a historical road trip into an immersive, deeply informative journey. Whether you are actively plotting a multi-state battlefield tour or simply exploring America's defining conflict from the comfort of an armchair, the book is highly recommended as a definitive reference for your library.

~Kent Fonner



Joseph Michael Boslet, *Little Round Top: A Reassessment of July 2, 1863* (Savas Beatie: El Dorado Hills, CA 2025) ISBN 9781611215649

One of my earliest memories of Gettysburg is standing on a boulder on Little Round Top imaging the battle that took place around Devil's Den, the valley below, and the rock-strewn sides of the hill. Over the years, like many, my thoughts on the struggle there were influenced by Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels* and the subsequent movie *Gettysburg*. There are ghosts from the past and drama on that hill which we often imagine like cinematic moments in a neatly directed film.

History, however, is rarely a Hollywood script.

In his new book, *Little Round Top at Gettysburg: A Reassessment of July 2, 1863*, author Joseph Michael Boslet strips away romanticized postwar legends. As the first full-length study on this specific clash in over two decades, it is a total breath of fresh air for Civil War researchers. Boslet, a Vietnam combat veteran, brings a practical military eye to the terrain and tactics, sorting out what actually happened from what many *imagined* happened.

One of the best parts of Boslet's reassessment is how he handles the legendary commanders, starting with Colonel Strong Vincent. Popular history often treats the defense of the hill as a top-down order from Union high command. Boslet challenges this by highlighting the sheer chaos and lack of timely intelligence on the field. He dives into primary sources to show that Vincent acted entirely on his own initiative. When Vincent intercepted a courier screaming for help, he didn't wait around for his division commander's permission. He took his brigade and sprinted to the summit. Boslet paints a vivid picture of a leader working through the blinding fog of war, making split-second decisions that ultimately saved the Union left flank and cost the young colonel his life.

Then, of course, there's Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and the famous 20th Maine. It is easy to look at Chamberlain as an untouchable superhero who saved the day with a desperate bayonet charge. While Boslet absolutely respects Chamberlain's bravery, he provides a much more nuanced, realistic evaluation of his role. Instead of viewing the 20th Maine in isolation, Boslet weaves them back into the larger tactical puzzle. He looks at the brutal undergrowth, the confusing terrain, and the exhaustion of the individual soldiers. Chamberlain was not acting in a vacuum; his success was deeply intertwined with the bloody sacrifices of the other regiments on that hill.

What makes this book a great armchair read is its grit. Boslet's background in military intelligence shines through. He reminds us that the battle was not won by perfect textbook maneuvers, but by real, exhausted human beings dealing with broken ground and terrible communication.

If you want a deeper, more realistic appreciation for the heroes of Gettysburg, grab a copy. It will completely change how you look at those famous rocks the next time you visit.

~Kent Fonner

FINIS!