

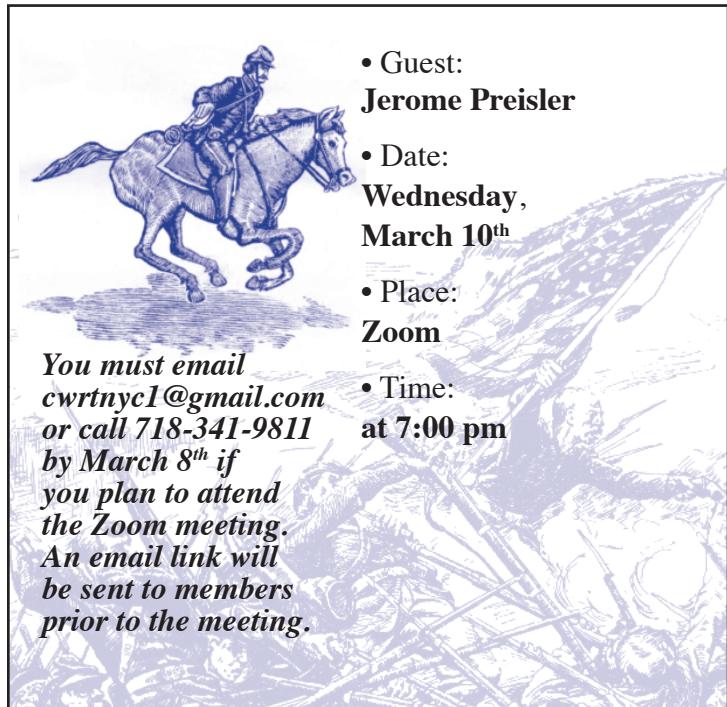
THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 69, No. 6

643rd Meeting

March 2021



You must email
cwrtnyc1@gmail.com
or call 718-341-9811
by March 8th if
you plan to attend
the Zoom meeting.
An email link will
be sent to members
prior to the meeting.

- Guest:
Jerome Preisler
- Date:
**Wednesday,
March 10th**
- Place:
Zoom
- Time:
at 7:00 pm

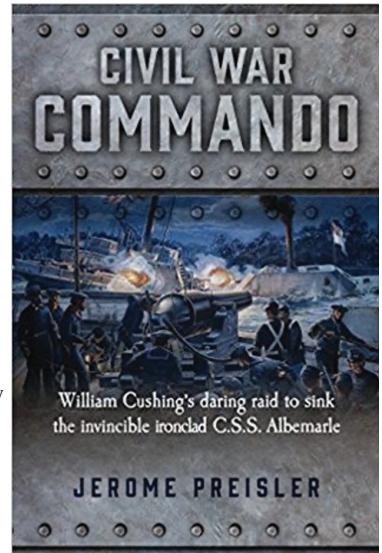
Jerome Preisler

Jerome Preisler is the prolific author of almost forty books of fiction and narrative nonfiction, including all eight novels in the New York Times bestselling Tom Clancy's Power Plays series.



His latest book is Net Force: Dark Web (November 2019), the first novel in a relaunch of the New York Times bestselling series co-created by Tom Clancy. In May 2020, the novella Net Force: Eye of the Drone came out

Among Jerome's recent works of narrative history are Code Name Caesar: The Secret Hunt for U-boat 864 During World War Two, and First to Jump: How the Band of Brothers Was Aided by the Brave Paratroopers of Pathfinders Company. His next book of nonfiction, Civil War Commando: William Cushing's Daring Raid to Sink the Invincible Ironclad C.S.S. Albemarle, published by Regnery Books in October 2020.



Conscription Act

A persistent challenge during the Civil War was the low number of men volunteering to serve in the Union army. Senator Henry Wilson, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, sponsored the Conscription Act of 1863, which established the first national draft system and required registration by every male citizen and immigrant who had applied for citizenship between the ages of 20 and 45. The New York Times called the Conscription Act "the condition of victory," but many people criticized the law because it provided an exemption for those who could pay a \$300 fee. Some critics argued that the law punished the poor, while others insisted that it interfered with states' rights, since state-based militias had fought in previous wars. However, even with such conscription laws, both the Union and Confederate armies continued to rely mostly upon volunteers.

From: American Battlefield Trust



Question of the month:

As an eighteen-year-old first lieutenant, what future U.S. general earned the Medal of Honor at Missionary Ridge, an award given to his son seventy-nine years later, making then the only father-son combination ever to receive the distinguished medal?

2021 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2021

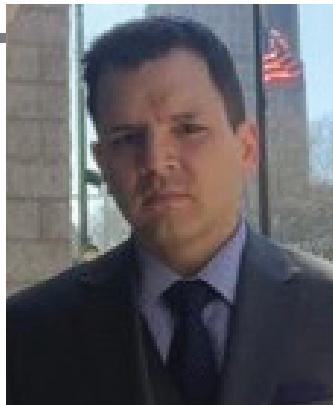
• March 10th (Zoom) •
Jerome Preisler

• April 14th (Zoom) •
TBA

• May 12th (Zoom) •
TBA

President's Message

Welcome to March. Hopefully, we can leave February's snow and ice behind and look forward to more spring-like weather. This month we have as our guest speaker, the bestselling novelist and author Jerome Preisler.



Mr. Preisler has written over forty published books of fiction and narrative nonfiction, including all eight titles in the New York Times bestselling TOM CLANCY'S POWER PLAYS series. He has also penned numerous non-fiction titles in his innate narrative style including the World War 2 history "First to Jump" and the recent "Brooklyn to Baghdad: An NYPD Intelligence Cop Fights Terror in Iraq" (with Chris Strom). Mr. Preisler is also a native of Brooklyn, so it is always nice to have a "hometown" speaker. This is especially so when the topic of conversation is a man like William Cushing, who is the subject of his latest book Civil War Commando.

I encourage everyone to attend our meeting in March. Going forward, we will be emailing the link to the zoom meetings directly in the email notices. As such, if you have any friends or family who would like to see Mr. Preisler's presentation, you can simply forward them the link and they will have access.

Thanks again.

KRIS J. KASNICKI



New Book Releases

The Howling Storm: Weather, Climate and the American Civil War, by Kenneth W. Noe. Hardcover \$39.43 Amazon, pp 688, LSU Press October 2020

Abe: Abraham and His Times, by David S. Reynolds Hardcover \$30.37 Amazon, pp1088, Penguin Press September 2020

Answer:

Arthur MacArthur, Jr., father of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, of World War II fame.

From: Civil War Trivia and Fact Book, by Webb Garrison

THE DISPATCH



Founded January 24, 1951

The Dispatch is published monthly, except June, July, August, and December, by

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.,

139-33 250th Street,
Rosedale, N.Y. 11422
Telephone CWRT/NY at (718) 341-9811

During business hours.

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Civil War Events During the Month of March 1863

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|---|
| March 3 | Abraham Lincoln signs the Conscription Act, creating the first national military draft in American history | March 17 | Engagement at Kelly's Ford, Virginia |
| March 11 | Confederates at Fort Pemberton block Union attempt to bypass Vicksburg's defenses | March 24/25 | Union amphibious expedition skirmishes with Confederates, Steele's Bayou, Mississippi |
| March 14 | USS <i>Mississippi</i> runs aground near Port Hudson. The ship's crew scuttles the vessel in order to keep it from falling into Confederate hands | March 26 | West Virginia votes for gradual emancipation in the state |
| | | March 27 | Skirmish at Palatka, Florida |
- From: *American Battlefield Trust*

Meade & Lee After Gettysburg

By Jeffrey Wm. Hunt

What happened between the night of July 13/14, 1863 when Lee's Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) escaped across the Potomac River, and November 26 when Meade's Army of the Potomac (AoP) stepped off on the Mine Run Campaign? If you say "not much", you need to read Jeffrey William Hunt's recent three volume set covering this time frame! It's been popular to write about Lee's retreat from Gettysburg, ending with his Potomac crossing at Falling Waters, MD, but this is where Hunt's first book begins, with Lee's escape from what one wag called the "Army of the Poke-'em-Back". The soldiers felt they could destroy the ANV, but officers were fewer optimistic. All agreed Union casualties would be significant. But it was immaterial; Lee escaped.

Detailing Meade's attempt to cut Lee off from Richmond, or interrupt his supply line to Staunton, the actions were dominated by cavalry clashes fought to occupy the Blue Ridge Mountain gaps connecting the Shenandoah and Loudon Valleys. Snicker's, Ashby's, Manassas, and Chester Gaps were critical exits for Lee's army. Meade wanted to prevent Lee from entering the Loudon Valley and its links to Richmond. Lee wanted to retain these Shenandoah Valley exit points AND prevent Meade from cutting his supply line to Staunton.

On July 17, 1863 - three days after Lee crossed the Potomac - Meade's infantry started crossing the River on pontoon bridges laid by the 50th New York Engineers, following cavalry clashes around Harper's Ferry. On Meade's mind was the fact that most of the Union's "Emergency Volunteers" - mobilized to defend Northern soil against the invaders - were unwilling to cross into

Maryland or were near the end of their 90-day enlistment. They were also insufficiently trained to combat Lee's veterans. Reynolds' death and Hancock's serious wounding at Gettysburg meant Meade's veterans were led by a mixed bag of Corps commanders. And Meade had less than 10,000 mounted men to locate and monitor the enemy's movements. Lastly, only days into this phase of the Campaign, Meade lost several veteran regiments that were sent to quell the Draft Riots in New York.

With the opposing armies separated by the Blue Ridge Mountains, the cavalry's mobility and scouting ability were vital to both commanders, resulting in many "minor" clashes. But Pleasanton was no match for Stuart, and Union Corps commanders' inability to manage large numbers of troops, complicated Union efforts. When added to Meade's caution, the Army of the Potomac failed to trap Lee in the Shenandoah Valley. Instead, by July 25th Longstreet's I and A.P. Hill's III Corps escaped through Chester Gap to Culpeper Courthouse. By the 29th Jubal Early's Division formed around Madison Courthouse on Robertson's River, ultimately reuniting with the rest of Ewell's II Corps at Rapidan Station. The AoP sprawled around Warrenton Junction awaiting restoration of the Orange & Alexandria Railroad supply line. This allowed both sides to rest, reinforce, and reorganize before renewing their struggle in Central Virginia.

If your interests are mainly major Civil War battles this is not a book for you. The fewer than 700 combined casualties in this 3 week period tells you it was not marked by major conflict. But if you wonder about Meade and Lee's strategic considerations and movements you will enjoy this writing. Despite lacking a major clash of arms, the story of these seventeen days suggests the ANV remained a formidable foe, characterized by good morale and great leadership. Perhaps it was well for the Union that Meade did not attempt to fight Lee north of the Potomac.

Reviewed by John Allen

THE BATTLE AUTUMN OF 1862

by John Greenleaf Whittier

The flags of war like storm-birds fly,
The charging trumpets blow;
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,
No earthquake strives below.

And, calm and patient, Nature keeps
Her ancient promise well,
Though o'er her bloom and
greenness sweeps
The battle's breath of hell.

And still she walks in golden hours
Through harvest-happy farms,
And still she wears her fruits and flowers
Like jewels on her arms.

What mean the gladness of the plain,
This joy of eve and morn,
The mirth that shakes the beard of grain
And yellow locks of corn?

Ah! eyes may well be full of tears,
And hearts with hate are hot;
But even-paced come round the years,
And Nature changes not.

She meets with smiles our bitter grief,
With songs our groans of pain;
She mocks with tint of flower and leaf
The war-field's crimson stain.

Still, in the cannon's pause, we hear
Her sweet thanksgiving-psalm;
Too near to God for doubt or fear,
She shares the eternal calm.

She knows the seed lies safe below
The fires that blast and burn;
For all the tears of blood we sow
She waits the rich return.

She sees with clearer eye than ours
The good of suffering born,—
The hearts that blossom like her flowers,
And ripen like her corn.

Oh, give to us, in times like these,
The vision of her eyes;
And make her fields and fruited trees
Our golden prophecies!

Oh, give to us her finer ear!
Above this stormy din,
We too would hear the bells of cheer
Ring peace and freedom in.

From: *discoverpoetry.com*



The Siege of Port Hudson: “Forty Days and Nights in the Wilderness of Death” U.S. National Park Service

We eat all the meat and bread in the fort...eat all the beef--all the mules--all the Dogs--and all the Rats around us.

So wrote a soldier who had been inside the Confederate defenses at Port Hudson, Louisiana, during one of the longest sieges in American military history. For 48 days in 1863, he and his fellow troops defended a fort that stood on top of a bluff above the Mississippi River; for all of those 48 days, Union soldiers pummeled the Confederates with cannon shot and rifle fire.

Finally, just five days after the Confederates were defeated at Vicksburg, Port Hudson surrendered to the Union. With these two victories, the North could finally claim undisputed control of the Mississippi River.

Though the Civil War would rage on for almost two more years, the siege at Port Hudson, and the battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg--which all occurred the same week--together struck a blow from which the South never recovered.



Confederate fort after the siege. (Massachusetts MOLLUS Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA)

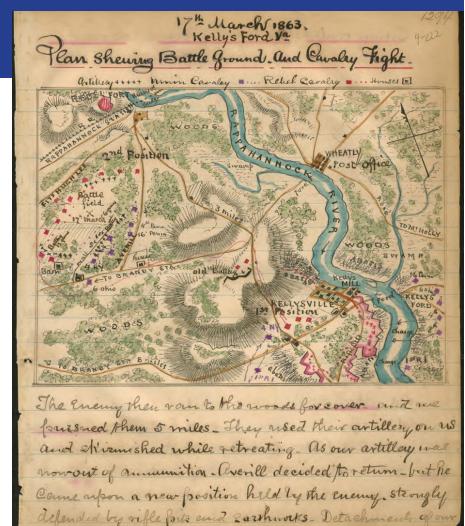
Battle of Kelly's Ford Virginia

In 1863, the recently organized Union Cavalry Corps possessed superior equipment and the advantages of a plentiful supply of men and horses over their Confederate counterparts, but lacked the confidence, experience, and leadership to challenge Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart's troopers. That March, Confederate cavalry under Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee conducted raids against elements of the Union line along the Rappahannock River. In response, on March 16th, 2,100 Union cavalrymen under Brig. Gen. William Averell set out to "rout or destroy" Lee and his cavalry as the Confederates sheltered south of the river near Culpeper Courthouse. The next day, Averell forced a crossing at Kelly's Ford, 25 miles upstream from Fredericksburg, and pressed forward two miles into open ground. Averell repulsed several of Lee's attacks, forcing the Confederate cavalry from the field with a counterattack. Stuart's youthful and "gallant" artillery

chief, Major John Pelham, was killed. With victory in his grasp, Averell withdrew back across the river that evening. Lee had avoided being crushed, which meant

that Averell had failed in his primary objective, but the battle proved that Union cavalry was a force to be reckoned with. The battle set the stage for Brandy Station and other cavalry actions of the Gettysburg Campaign that summer.

From: *American Battlefield Trust*



continued on page 6

SPOTLIGHT: DAN MCCARTHY

This month we have the pleasure to get to know a little more about Dan McCarthy.

Dispatch: Dan, what positions have you held on the CWRTNY?

DMC: I have been a Director on the Board of CWRTNY since 2014. My friend, Marty Smith, was the newly elected President then, and knowing that I had served as Co-President of the independent, all volunteer, not-for-profit Columbia Business School Alumni Club of NY, he recruited me because of my nonprofit experience, and interest in the Civil War.

Dispatch: Do you have relatives that served in the Civil War?

DMC: My great, great, great Grandfather, Dennis McCarthy, was born in 1826. In 1839 he immigrated to Crawfordsville, IN from County Kerry, Ireland. This was prior to the Great Famine of 1845-1849. His eight siblings all migrated too but they settled in St Paul, MN. He himself wound up in St. Paul helping to construct the first, wooden Wabasha Street Bridge which crosses the Mississippi. In 1860 he returned to IN by riverboat. During that trip while on the riverboat his son, my great Grandfather, John, was born. In 1864 at the age of 38, Dennis enlisted in the Indiana Volunteers serving in the 130th Regiment, Company B. He listed his occupation as farmer. The regiment saw action including the Battle of Nashville, the siege of Atlanta, Kennesaw Mountain and the Carolinas Campaign at the end of the war. A musket of his survives and is in the possession of one of my MN cousins.

Dispatch: When did you first become interested in the Civil War and what sparked that interest?

DMC: Gettysburg is about a 2-hour bus ride from suburban Philadelphia where I was schooled. My 8th grade class trip took us to the battlefield. My strongest memory of that day was the popularity of Devil's Den among my classmates because of its name. We also viewed the Cyclorama and the Electric Map both of which enthralled me. My family reprised that trip a couple of years later. Although light on details, my mother mentioned Pickett's Charge to me and pointed out Seminary Ridge while we gazed at the wide field below from somewhere near the Angle.

Dispatch: Which battle do you think is one of the most important of the CW?

DMC: Ken Burns' 1990 documentary The Civil War, reawakened my latent interest. I first turned to the second

volume of Shelby Foote's The Civil War: A Narrative, which describes the great battle enabling me to better grasp the events of that three-day conflict. The Battle of Gettysburg was the end of the beginning of the war and the beginning of the end of the Confederacy.



Dispatch: Which movie do you think portrays the Civil War best?

DMC: I saw D.W Griffiths' Birth of a Nation in college and that film, in addition Burn's documentary series, left a strong impression. However, the 1994 film Glory, had a stronger impact. The scene when the soldiers spoke individually and sang together by campfire light the night before their assault on Fort Wagner, vividly portrayed an infantryman's angst in anticipation of battle. It dramatically brought the war out of the history books and into the immediacy of the fight.

Honorable mention goes to Buster Crabbe's wonderful and hilarious, 1927, silent film The General which was based on a true Civil War spy adventure. The urgency of the locomotive chase behind enemy lines was not only humorous but thrilling as well.

Dispatch: Can you give us some information about your background?

DMC: Since 2016 I have worked as a Financial Planner for Fortis Lux Financial, an agency of MassMutual. My career in financial services began in 1987, when I joined MetLife out of Business School at Columbia University with an MBA in Finance. Spending 29 years with MetLife. I acquired my financial planning skills and developed my financial planning practice there. During that time, I earned the industry designations of Certified Life Underwriter (CLU®), Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC®) and Certified Financial Planner (CFP®).

Dispatch: Any last thoughts you would like to share with our readers?

DMC: Please be safe and follow all recommended protocols for the duration of the COVID crisis. Get your vaccine ASAP!

Please join our virtual CWRTNY Zoom meetings. Now you can invite your friends, too, no registration required. Meetings on Zoom do not include dinner, but they are tasty!

Reminder: kindly send us your 2020/2021 dues while our special, \$40, reduced pandemic pricing lasts. Thank you.