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**Des Moines
Civil War
Roundtable**

**March 2025
Headquarters District Iowa
General Order No. 499**

- The **Third meeting** of the Spring campaign will **March 19** at the **The Machine Shed**

The bar will open at 5:30 with the meal served at 6:30.

- Our program **Leo Landis** (State Historical Society of Iowa Curator) ***The U.S. 60th Colored Troops - A Demographic Overview***
- Meal choices **Stuffed Pork Loin & Roasted Turkey Breast** at **\$24.00**
- **Reservations & payment** will be accepted until **March 16.**

By command of Brigadier General Gordon McKenzie

Our web address www.dmcivilwar.com

Ronald R. Nurmi
Colonel & Adjutant
email- dmcwrt@gmail.com
1424 E Walnut St #4 DM 50316

For many it is time to renew your membership in the DMCWRT.
\$30.00 Newsletter via email
\$35.00 Newsletter via USPS
\$40.00 for Family

The following members have expiring dues--

Gene Capps 3-1	David Cannon 4-1	Chuck Collins 2-1	Kathy Hillard 2-1
Gerald Ingrisano 2-1	Phil Kotz 3-1	Larry McDougell 2-1	Dave Moraniec 3-1
Garry Ripperger 1-1	Wayne Wilson 5-1		

If there are errors please contact me, and I will correct the error.

Lee Proposes a Military Convention

The Civil War Months by Walter Coffey with permission

<https://civilwarmonths.com/2025/03/02/lee-proposes-a-military-convention-2/>

In late February, Lieutenant-General James Longstreet, corps commander in General-in-Chief Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, met between the Petersburg siege lines with Major-General E.O.C. Ord, commanding Federal General-in-Chief Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the James. Longstreet and Ord were meeting ostensibly to discuss the illicit trading that was going on between the troops in the trenches. Having been friends before the war, other topics were brought up, among them a possible peace. The two men agreed that since the political leaders had failed to reach a peace agreement, maybe the military leaders could do better. According to Longstreet:

"(Ord) thought the war had gone on long enough; that we should come together as former comrades and friends and talk a little. He suggested that the work as belligerents should be suspended; that General Grant and General Lee should meet and have a talk; that my wife, who was an old acquaintance and friend of Mrs. Grant in their girlhood days, should go into the Union lines and visit Mrs. Grant with as many Confederate officers as might choose to be with her. Then Mrs. Grant would return the call under escort of Union officers and visit Richmond; that while General Lee and General Grant were arranging for better feeling between the armies, they could be aided by intercourse between the ladies and officers until terms honorable to both sides could be found."

Longstreet presented this idea to Lee, who forwarded it to President Jefferson Davis. Lee warned Davis that Grant "will consent to no terms unless coupled with the condition of our return to the Union. Whether this will be acceptable to our people yet awhile I cannot say." Davis had consistently refused any peace agreement that meant reunion, but with the Army of Northern Virginia on the brink of collapse, Davis wrote:

"If you think the statements of General Ord render it probably useful that the Conference suggested should be had, you will proceed as you may prefer, and are clothed with all the

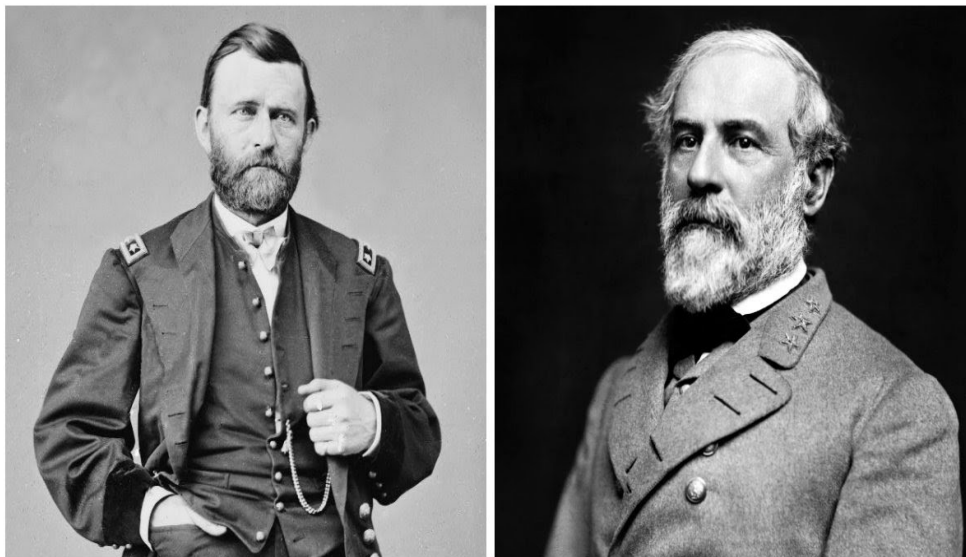
supplemental authority you may need in the consideration of any proposition for a Military Convention, or the appointment of a Commissioner to enter into such an arrangement as will cause at least temporary suspension of hostilities.”

Lee wrote to Grant on March 2:

“Lieut. Gen. Longstreet has informed me that, in a recent conversation between himself and Maj. Gen. Ord, as to the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties by means of a Military Convention, General Ord stated that if I desired to have an interview with you on the subject, you would not decline, provided I had authority to act.

“Sincerely desirous to leave nothing untried which may put an end to the calamities of War, I propose to meet you at such convenient time and place as you may designate, with the hope that, upon an interchange of views, it may be found practicable to submit the subjects of controversy between the belligerents to a Convention of the kind mentioned. In such event I am authorized to do whatever the result of the proposed interview may render necessary or advisable. Should you accede to the proposition I would suggest that, if agreeable to you, we meet at the place selected by Generals Ord and Longstreet for their interview at 11 a.m. on Monday next (the 6th).”

Longstreet then persuaded Lee to write a second letter asking to meet with Grant to discuss prisoner exchange. It was hoped that meeting would be the catalyst to get the two commanders to talk peace. Grant received Lee’s letters during dinner on the night of the 3rd. He read them and then forwarded the letter regarding the military convention to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton with a covering note: “I have not returned any reply but promised to do so at noon tomorrow. I respectfully request instructions.”



Lt Gen U.S. Grant and Gen R.E. Lee | Image Credit: Wikispaces.com

Stanton brought the message to President Abraham Lincoln, who was at the Capitol signing bills into law before Congress adjourned. Lincoln and Stanton concluded that allowing a military convention to take place would not only undermine the terms Lincoln had given for

peace at Hampton Roads, but it would indirectly recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation. Stanton therefore responded:

“The President directs me to say to you that he wishes you to have no conference with General Lee unless it be for the capitulation of Gen. Lee’s army, or on some minor and purely military matter. He instructs me to say that you are not to decide, discuss, or confer upon any political question. Such questions the President holds in his own hands; and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions. Meantime you are to press to the utmost your military advantages.”

Grant then responded to Lee:

“In regard to meeting you on the 6th instant, I would state that I have no authority to accede to your proposition for a conference on the subject proposed. Such authority is vested in the President of the United States alone. General Ord could only have meant that I would not refuse an interview on any subject on which I have a right to act, which, of course, would be such as are purely of a military character, and on the subject of exchanges which has been intrusted to me.”

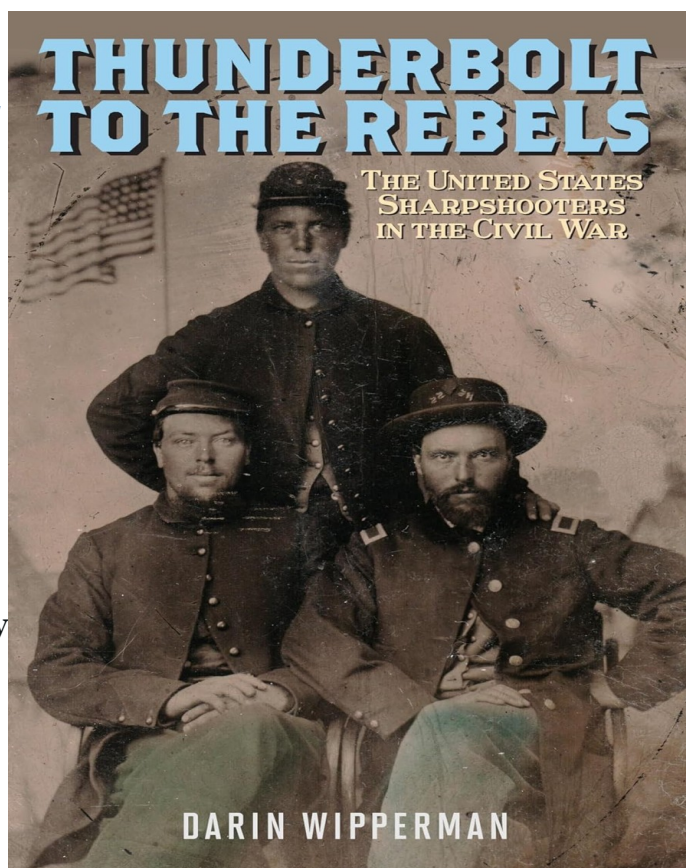
Thus, neither political nor military leaders would negotiate an end to the war. The end would only come on the battlefield.

Thunderbolt to the Rebels: The United States

Sharpshooters in the Civil War. By Darin Wipperman. Essex, Connecticut: Stackpole Books, 2025. Hardcover, 362 pp. \$34.95.

Reviewed by John G. Selby

Readers of the Emerging Civil War series are undoubtedly familiar with William Fox’s list of “300 Fighting Regiments.” Two famous regiments that made the list were the 1st and 2nd United States



Sharpshooters (USSS). Known for their fighting spirit and distinctive green uniforms, what separated the 18 volunteer companies from other state volunteer companies was the requirement of marksmanship with a rifle: successful applicants had to shoot 10 consecutive shots within 5 inches of the center of a target from 200 yards. Over 2,000 young men would pass this test and serve in the USSS in its four years of existence.

Contemporary interest in snipers has prompted many to assume that the Civil War sharpshooters were the progenitors of today's sniper. As Civil War author Darin Wipperman argues in his new book on the USSS, the men were used as snipers—some of the time. But most of the time the companies were used as regular infantry, albeit with a recognition of their higher value as skirmishers. Furnished with the breech-loading Sharps rifle in the spring of 1862, the USSS fought in nearly every major engagement in the eastern theater, save First Manassas and the Appomattox Campaign. A “central moment” (270) in their history came at Chancellorsville, when they assisted in the capture of the 23rd Georgia and fought valiantly against General J. E. B. Stuart's assault on May 3, 1863. The deadliest period for the USSS was the opening month of the Overland Campaign. Continuously fighting in each of the major battles, the USSS accumulated “one third” (270) of all its combat deaths in May 1864. Unable to replenish the ranks depleted by illness, wounds, transfers, resignations, and deaths, some companies of the 1st USSS mustered out when their 3-year enlistments expired in August–September 1864. The remaining companies soldiered on until March 1865, when they were officially dissolved.

Wipperman's detailed account of the combat experiences of the USSS complements and in some cases supersedes earlier works by Roy Marcott and Charles A. Stevens (an officer in Company G, 1st USSS). Wipperman scoured the archives for information on hundreds of men who served in the regiments, and nearly every paragraph in the book offers a quotation from one of the soldiers. Readers who enjoy reading the exact words of the soldiers will find this book very reminiscent of Noah Andre Trudeau's 3-volume series on the last year of the war. Additionally, Wipperman grounds his analysis in a thorough use of over 200 secondary sources. Finally, he offers sensible interpretations concerning the underutilization of these outstanding marksmen. None of their commanding generals sought to use them solely as skirmishers, snipers, or small reconnaissance teams. Instead, they were attached to brigades and divisions the same as other volunteer units and were rarely used for their special skill. Furthermore, the founder of the USSS, Hiram Berdan, proved to be a great promoter but a poor leader and administrator (he left the Army in 1864). Lastly, most states had at least one “crack” regiment known for its marksmanship and martial prowess, thus minimizing the uniqueness of the USSS.

Overall, in just under 300 pages Wipperman has written a lively account of the men and their combat experiences in the USSS. With detailed endnotes, dozens of photographs, and excellent maps by the ever-reliable cartographer Hal Jespersen, Darin Wipperman has produced a well-written book that should grace the shelves of every Civil War enthusiast.

John G. Selby is a Professor Emeritus of history at Roanoke College and the former holder of the John R. Turbyfill Chair in History. A Civil War scholar, Selby wrote: *Meade the Price of Command, 1863-1865*; *Virginians at War: The Civil War Experiences of Seven Young Confederates*; and coedited *Civil War Talks: Further Reminiscences of George S. Bernard and His Fellow Veterans*

The Emerging Civil War March 2025's Cover Image: The Confederate Line at Atlanta

This month's cover image is a photo taken by George Barnard.

According to the Library of Congress, where you can find [a hi-res version of the image](#):

"View along the rebel line just

east of the Western & Atlantic R.R., Potter's house [Ponder house] in the middle ground, Atlanta, Ga., Nov. 1864. Photograph shows Confederate fortifications and chevaux-de-frise."

For more on Barnard's photography around Atlanta, see 100 Significant Civil War Photographs: Atlanta Campaign by ECW alum Stephen Davis, published by Historical Publications, the same folks who bring you Civil War News.





Emerging
Civil War

2024 Year in Review: The Top 25 Emerging Civil War Book Reviews



By **Tim Talbott** on December 28, 2024

Without further ado, the following are 2024's Top 25 reviews!

1. The Boy Generals: George Custer, Wesley Merritt, and the Cavalry of the Army of the Potomac, from the Gettysburg Retreat Through the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864
Reviewed by Bert Dunkerly
2. The Battle of Little Bighorn: A New Appraisal
Reviewed by Dan Davis

3. [The World Will Never See the Like: The Gettysburg Reunion of 1913](#)
Reviewed by Jon Tracey
4. [Longstreet: The Confederate General Who Defied the South](#)
Reviewed by Andrew F. Lang
5. [Klan War: Ulysses S. Grant and the Battle to Save Reconstruction](#)
Reviewed by Rich Condon
6. [Sexual Violence and American Slavery: The Making of a Rape Culture in the Antebellum South](#)
Reviewed by Sheritta Bitikofer
7. [Abolitionist of the Most Dangerous Kind: James Montgomery and His War on Slavery](#)
Reviewed by Tim Talbott
8. [Soldier of Destiny: Slavery, Secession, and the Redemption of Ulysses S. Grant](#)
Reviewed by John G. Selby
9. [The Limits of the Lost Cause: Essays on Civil War Memory](#)
Reviewed by Patrick Young
10. [Creating a More Perfect Slaveholders' Union: Slavery, the Constitution, and Secession in Antebellum America](#)
Reviewed by Kevin C. Donovan
11. [In the Shadow of the Round Tops: Longstreet's Countermarch, Johnston's Reconnaissance and the Enduring Battles for the Memory of July 2, 1863](#)
Reviewed by Peter Miele
12. [An Unholy Traffic: Slave Trading in the Civil War South](#) Reviewed by Patrick Kelly-Fischer
13. [The Civil War and the Summer of 2020](#) Reviewed by Sam Flowers
14. [Searching for Irvin McDowell: The Civil War's Forgotten General](#) Reviewed by Kevin C. Donovan
15. ["Tell Mother Not to Worry": Soldier Stories from Gettysburg's George Spangler Farm](#)
Reviewed by Peter Vermilyea
16. [The Iron Dice of Battle: Albert Sidney Johnston and the Civil War in the West](#)
Reviewed by Sean Michael Chick
17. [America's Unending Civil War: The Enduring Conflict from Jamestown through to Recent Elections](#) Reviewed by Evan Portman
18. [Building a House Divided: Slavery, Westward Expansion, and the Roots of the Civil War](#)
Reviewed by Patrick Kelly-Fischer
19. [J. E. B. Stuart: The Soldier and the Man](#) Reviewed by John B. Sinclair
20. [Lincoln's God: How Faith Transformed a President and a Nation](#)
Reviewed by Max Longley
21. [Pulpits of the Lost Cause: The Faith and Politics of Former Confederate Chaplains during](#)

Reconstruction Reviewed by Max Longley

22. Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom During the Civil War
Reviewed by Rich Condon

23. Adelbert Ames, the Civil War, and the Creation of Modern America Reviewed by Brian Swartz

24. Sleeping with the Ancestors Reviewed by Sarah Kay Bierle

25. Silent Cavalry: How Union Soldiers from Alabama Helped Sherman Burn Atlanta and Then Got
Written Out of History Reviewed by Doug Crenshaw