



# Banner of the Blue and Gray

Newsletter of the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable Frederick, Maryland  
Founded January 30, 1989

254th Meeting

November 2016

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## November 17, 2016 National Museum of Civil War Medicine 48 E. Patrick St, Frederick, Maryland

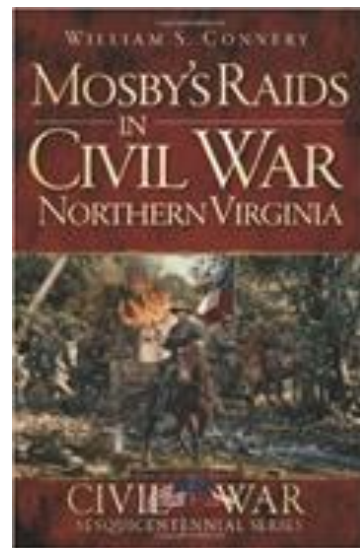


**Speaker: William Connery**

**Topic: Mosby's Raids in Civil War  
Northern Virginia**

The most famous War Between the States name in Northern Virginia, other than General Robert E. Lee, is Colonel John S. Mosby, the Gray Ghost. He stands out among nearly 1,000 generals who served in the war, celebrated most for his raids that captured Union general Edwin Stoughton in Fairfax Court House and Colonel Daniel French Dulany in Rose Hill, near Alexandria. By 1864, he was a feared partisan guerrilla in the North and a nightmare for Union troops protecting Washington City. After the war, his support for presidential candidate Ulysses S. Grant forced Mosby to leave his native Virginia for Hong Kong as U.S. consul. A personal mentor to young George S. Patton, Mosby's military legacy extended to World War II. William S. Connery brings alive the many dimensions of this American hero. In 2013 and 2013, Mr. Connery was the docent at the Mosby House Museum in Warrenton. He will have books available for purchase.

William Connery grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. He has a degree in history from the University of Maryland–College Park. Mr. Connery has been contributing to the Civil War Courier, the Washington Times Civil War page and other publications. In 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal for his previous History Press book, *Civil War Northern Virginia 1861*. Mr. Connery is a member of the Company of Military Historians, the Capitol Hill Civil War Round Table, and the E.A. Poe Society of Baltimore. He can be reached at [william.connery@verizon.net](mailto:william.connery@verizon.net).



# **NEARBY NOVEMBER EVENTS**

## **November 10- Ezra Carman and the Maryland Campaign of September, 1862.**

At 6 PM, C. Burr Artz Public Library, 110 east Patrick Street, Frederick. Noted historian Dr. Thomas G. Clemens discusses his third installment in the diary of Ezra Carman, a witness to the Maryland Campaign. Program courtesy of the Frederick County Public Libraries/NPS 2016 partnership in celebration of the National Park Service Centennial.

## **November 12- Frederick's Civil War Series, Spies in Frederick County.**

2:30 PM, National Museum of Civil War Medicine

Local historian Matt Borders will reveal the secret history of Frederick's Civil War. Frederick's strategic location in Maryland ensured that the secret services of both Union and Confederate sides would square off in this region.

## **November 12- Porch Program: Women Soldiers of the Civil War**

at the Newcomer House, 11-am-5pm, 18422 Shepherdstown Pike Keedysville, MD.

## **November 19- Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address (10am), Remembrance Day Parade (1pm), and Cemetery Illumination at Gettysburg (5:30-9pm).**

**December 3- Annual Illumination at the Antietam Battlefield** begins at 6pm, Rain Date is December 10.

This list is by no means all inclusive. Some of these events will repeat during the month. You can always use our Facebook page to connect with members taking their own tours during the month. What better way to explore local battlefields and historic sites than to go with your fellow members!



## In Case You Missed It.....

I'm pleased to report that our October meeting was better attended than most. We listened to Dan Vermilya's presentation about James Garfield in the Civil War. Garfield seemed to be a witness to many campaigns and hot spots of the war. A passionate anti-slavery Republican as war approached, he lobbied hard for a field command, eventually become the Colonel of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ohio in August 1861. He had to recruit to fill his ranks and eventually saw action at the Battle of Middle Creek in Kentucky in January 1862 and late as part of Buell's Army as it arrived on the second day of the Battle of Shiloh. Despite his inexperience as a soldier he bested Rebel commanders with greater was knowledge. He served on the court martial of Fitz John Porter and later at Murfreesboro before taking his seat in

Congress at the end of 1863. He maintained a connection to veteran groups and causes throughout his life. If you couldn't make the meeting you can still purchase Dan's books, *James Garfield in the Civil War* and *The Battle of Kennesaw Mountain* on Amazon.com.

## PREZ SEZ

### THANKSGIVING and LINCOLN

Prior to the Civil War and the Lincoln administration many states held their own individual dates for a general day of thanks giving ,however, after receiving a request from a magazine editor to have only one date observed Lincoln agreed to look into the request. Ultimately it was Secretary of State Wm. H. Seward who actually wrote the famous document and it was pronounced to the public on October 3, 1863, stating among other things, that hereafter the last Thursday of each Nov. shall be observed as a general date of thanksgiving and blessings in all states.



## Ramblings from the Raffle Table



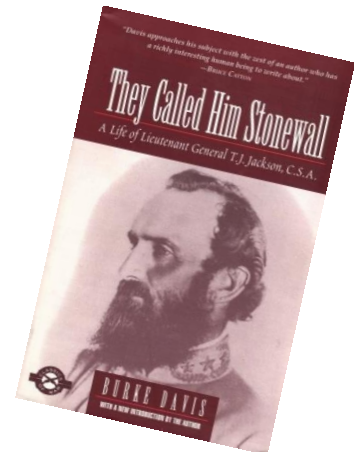
November brings crisp Autumn days and a yearning for a crackling fire on the hearth while you curl up in a soft easy chair with a good book. That's what we are here for - to provide you with that good book for just the price of a raffle ticket (2/\$1.00).

Forget about stuffy starving Pilgrims, we have Lincoln to thank for Thanksgiving as we know it. He declared a national day of Thanksgiving to be on the fourth Thursday in November in 1863. (Mrs. Lincoln probably established Black Friday shopping.) Now rewind two years when a poem was written by Henry Washburn as a result of a local Civil War battle fought at Ball's Bluff, VA (Oct. 21, 1861). His poem was inspired by the death of an 18 year old lieutenant in the 15<sup>th</sup> Mass. Infantry, killed crossing the Potomac. When put to music by George Root in 1863, the death of Willie Grout became a mournful anthem, *The Vacant Chair*. This song was popular on both sides of the conflict as it extolled the poignant loss felt in far too many homes that Thanksgiving.



### November's Featured Selections:

Burke Davis (1913-2006) applied his narrative skill and eye for detail to bring to life Confederate luminaries such as Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee. Davis' prolific writing career also brought accounts of the Union general William Tecumseh Sherman's infamous march to the sea and the Appomattox Campaign among others. Davis also



wrote books for all ages about earlier America while writing for Colonial Williamsburg. His thorough research makes these books informative as well as a pleasure to read.

Looking forward to seeing you at our November Meeting and feeling very thankful for your continued interest and support of our Raffle Table.

*Kathi*



## BOOK REVIEW by Matt Borders (condensed)

*Roll Call to Destiny: The Soldier's Eye View of Civil War Battles* was written by Brent Nosworthy after the success of his volume; *Bloody Crucible of Courage*. It was while writing that massive tome that the author realized the potential for looking in depth at small unit actions during the American Civil War. For this work "small units" are defined as "a group that fights as a monolithic entity and thus undergoes similar experiences, rather than a formally defined level of military organization or size of the fighting force (pg.3)." This broad definition of a small unit allows the author to look at everything from a single section of artillery up through a division of troops as a single experience sharing entity.

By looking at a single unit such as the Second Minnesota Volunteer Infantry at Missionary Ridge, Chattanooga or the Seventh South Carolina Cavalry at the Battle of Darbytown Road, Petersburg, the author helps individualize the events of the American Civil War. By moving away from the commanding generals and the actions of whole armies we get a much fuller picture as to the personal actions of individuals both heroic and cowardly. More importantly we are able to see how the actions of just a few can affect a much larger whole.

In the case of the Seventh South Carolina Cavalry at the Battle of Darbytown Road, we see an interesting combination of mounted and dismounted cavalry tactics. Though in the end the Confederate counter attack at the Darbytown Road would fail, the actions of the Seventh South Carolina Cavalry, including dismounted skirmishing and a mounted sabre charge did much to aid the initial Confederate success. The actions of the Seventh South Carolina were a reminder to the Union Cavalry, who by this point in the war had developed to at least equal to their southern counter parts in prowess, not to discount the abilities and daring of Confederate horsemen. These actions also spoke to the Confederacy's willingness to adapt, even if the adaption meant the use of older shock tactics such as the sabre charge. "They were to charge and rely exclusively on the sabre, and he (Colonel Alexander C. Haskell) warned his men 'that a pistol fired before the enemy was routed was a death offense' (pg. 261)." The work includes a number of other small unit actions involving fighting ranging from the Virginia Peninsula all the way out to Fort Hindman in Arkansas. In each case the analysis is of just a small piece of the engagement, with an overview of the greater battle to help keep the analyzed portion in context to the rest of the fighting.

It is while putting the units that are fighting into the overall context of the battle that the author hits somewhat of a snag. While the description of the action and the unit's position in regards to its compatriots as well as its opponents is exquisite, it is the author's visual aids that are difficult to understand, specifically the maps that he chose to use. While the maps themselves are very detailed, they are also, in many cases, quite small, making the already tiny specific notes and identifications on many of them very difficult to read without a magnifying glass. This limits the effectiveness of deciphering the battle and puts a strain on the eyes. This of course is more of an editing complaint than it is of the actual work itself.

*Roll Call to Destiny* is without a doubt a much more layman friendly work than Mr. Nosworthy's *Bloody Crucible of Courage*, which goes into minute detail regarding mid Nineteenth Century warfare and black powder tactics. However, the author having chosen to do a work looking at the use of tactics by individual groups of soldiers is unable to completely remove some very technical information. Specifically the first chapter "New Weapons, new ways of warfare (pg.11-31)" and in several tactical analysis specifically planted throughout the manuscript (pg. 79-83, 109-111, and 276-280). These sections can be quite technical at times and could be difficult for a layman or one with just a passing interest in the American Civil War to digest. Happily the author appears to have foreseen such a problem and as such has isolated these tactical reviews and discussions to the first chapter as a whole and to the end of chapters three, four and ten. Mr. Nosworthy even goes so far as to shade these areas to further separate the two parts of the work.

In conclusion Brent Nosworthy's *Roll Call to Destiny* is a triumph of the Military History field. The innovative subject and groundbreaking research taken on by the author has been given a much more human edge making for not only excellent, well researched history, but also an interesting read that will keep the pages turning.

**Note: This review has copyright protection.**

**We are on Facebook! Please check out our page for timely updates, local events, or comments. Please read and share our posts!**



<https://m.facebook.com/fccwrt>

Gary Dyson is our “face” for Facebook.

Help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT!! We have 113 “likes” to date. This number fluctuates at times. I haven’t figured out just why.

Join Facebook. Share posts with friends! You’ll get more timely notice of events when you check us out on Facebook.

### **Our MISSION**

**TO** cultivate and preserve

Frederick County’s Civil War heritage and broaden the understanding of the Civil War Era and its impact on our nation.

**TO** explore the many facets of the Civil War from the battlefield to first-person narratives, including guest lectures by writers and historians.

**TO** support historical projects and activities aimed at increasing public interest and appreciation of our Civil War history, both locally and nationally.

### **Looking Ahead**

While our speaker list for this season is set, please let us know of any topics or speakers that you’d like to hear about. We hope to see you at our next meeting, December 15th!

### **2016-2017 Board of Directors**

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**As our 2016-17 begins we have begun our membership drive anew. We can't continue this Roundtable without your support. We're always looking for new members to join our ranks too. Recruit your friends!**

For those who remembered to renew your FCCWRT membership, thank you! Your dues make it possible for us to continue to fulfill our mission. We can't continue without your support! Please ask your friends to join so we can do even more!

As a member of our group, you'll enjoy these benefits:

- receive the current newsletter
- receive email updates of local events related to Civil War history
- always have a place to be on the third Thursday of the month

Our yearly dues are:

- \$30.00 for an individual
- \$50.00 for a family up to four
- \$5.00 for out of state members and members under 16 years of age