



Circular Memorandum #524

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Announcing Our 554th Meeting

March 2021

**"Grant vs Lee in the Overland Campaign"
Will be Presented by Gordon C. Rhea**

DATE: Saturday, March 13

PROGRAM: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Your Home

Meet our Speaker Gordon C. Rhea

Gordon C. Rhea received his B.A. in history from Indiana University, his M.A. in history from Harvard University, and his law degree from Stanford University Law School. He served as Special Assistant to the Chief Counsel of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities for two years and as an Assistant United States Attorney in Washington D.C. and the United States Virgin Islands for some seven years. He has been in the private practice of law since 1983.



Mr. Rhea has written seven award-winning books about the American Civil War, including *The Battle of the Wilderness*, *The Battles at Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern*, *To the North Anna River*, *Cold Harbor*, *On To Petersburg*, *Carrying the Flag*, and *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee*. He has lectured across the country at the invitation of numerous historical societies, universities, and historic preservation organizations on topics of military history and the Civil War era and has served on the boards of historical societies, history magazines, and historical preservation organizations, including the Civil War Library and Museum, Philadelphia, the North and South magazine, and the Charleston South Carolina Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission. Mr. Rhea conducts

tours for organizations that raise funds to purchase and preserve historical sites related to the Civil War era, including the Civil War Trust, the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, the Blue and Gray Education Society, and the Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield. He has also appeared multiple times as a historian and presenter on nationwide television programs, including productions by The History Channel, A&E Channel, Discovery Channel, and C-Span.

"Grant vs Lee in the Overland Campaign"

More than a century and a half has elapsed since the Army of the Potomac crossed the James River and Baldy Smith's 18th Corps pressed toward Petersburg, aiming to sever the Army of Northern Virginia's main supply line. The six weeks of combat preceding the movement on Petersburg represents the most intense continuous bout of warfare the continent has ever witnessed. Each side's premier general - Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee - matched wits and endurance in a campaign of combat and maneuver from the Rapidan River to the James. Packed into those six horrific weeks were the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, the North Anna River, and Cold Harbor.

My talk will present an appraisal of Grant's and Lee's generalship during the Overland Campaign, as the meeting engagement between these two talented warriors is popularly called. The focus will be on the campaign's final days at Cold Harbor and Grant's decision to pry Lee from his formidable earthworks by slicing the Army of Northern Virginia's main supply line at Petersburg. The story is one of the most exciting in the annals of American military history.

The March Meeting Will Be a Zoom Meeting

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the March meeting will be a Zoom meeting. Big Spring Country Club, our meeting place, has informed us that they will be closed in March and we are going to hold this meeting as a Zoom meeting on the scheduled date as planned. The ongoing situation that continues to develop and continues to change with the virus will dictate how soon we can meet in person.

How Does Zoom Work?

This is basically how Zoom would work for a meeting. First, you will need to download the Zoom app to your computer, tablet, or cellphone. You can do this by going to zoom.us and clicking on "Resources" and "Download Zoom Client for Meetings". You will receive an email before the meeting with a **link** that you will click on and that will take you directly into the meeting. You will not need to enter a passcode or password as the link will take you directly into the meeting. We encourage you to log in ahead of the start time so that you will be ready when the meeting starts. At 7:00 you will see our President, Dave Hoffmann, who will host the meeting, introduce the speaker and then you will be able to see and hear the speaker give his talk. You can ask questions during the talk using the chat function and the speaker will answer at the end of the meeting. The meeting will last about one hour and of course you can drink your favorite beverages and munch on snacks while you watch, and you do not have to dress "up"!

Additional Zoom Features for the March Meeting

In our March meeting participants will have the option of turning on their cameras and microphones while waiting for the program to start. During this time, you will be able to see your fellow LCWRT members, talk, and send text messages to them. So, if you've been waiting to see some of your friends in LCWRT, the March meeting is where you can touch base.

Once the program starts at 7:00, we'll ask everyone to mute their microphones and turn off cameras. Text messaging through Chat will still be open to send messages to the speaker or individual members during the presentation.

Email Addresses - Very Important for Zoom Meetings

To connect to our Zoom Webinar activities, we need a current and active email for you. We have email addresses for most of our members. For the ones we do not have email addresses for, you will receive a request in your mailed newsletter to email me. I will need to have your email address before March 12 when the link to the meeting will be sent. You can send me your email at johnd.davis@twc.com. As a reminder, we do not share your email address with any outside group. If you receive the newsletter by email, you obviously do not need to send your email address to me unless you have a new email address.

Field Trip to Gettysburg Rescheduled for 2022

We have rescheduled the field trip to Gettysburg for next year! We will be going to Gettysburg April 27 - May 1, 2022! Mark your calendars now! Our guide will be James Hessler.



James is a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg National Military Park. His 2009 book, *Sickles at Gettysburg*, was awarded the R.E. Lee Civil War Round Table's Bachelder Coddington Award and the Gettysburg Civil War Round Table's Distinguished Book Award as the most outstanding work on the Gettysburg Campaign. Another of his books is *Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg*, which was co-authored with Wayne Motts and released in 2015. His most recent book, *Gettysburg's Peach Orchard*, was co-authored with Britt Isenberg and released in 2019. Jim has been a guest on NPR, Travel Channel, PCN-TV, Breitbart News, and Civil War Radio. He is a popular author and speaker at Civil War Round Tables and has taught courses for the Gettysburg Foundation and Harrisburg (PA) Area Community College. He lives in Gettysburg with his wife and children.

2021 Schedule

Saturday March 13	Gordon Rhea	"Grant vs Lee in the Overland Campaign"
Saturday April 10	Will Greene	"We Have Done All That is Possible and Must Be Resigned: The First Offensive At Petersburg"
Saturday May 8	Thomas Flagel	"War, Memory and the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion"
Saturday September 11	Keith Bohannon	"TBA"
Saturday October 9	William C. Davis	"TBA"
Saturday November 6	David Dixon	"TBA"
Saturday December 4	Wayne Mott	"TBA"

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You can now donate money to our Round Table without it costing you anything! You read that correctly; we now have the opportunity to receive **free money!** The LCWRT as a 501(c)(3) organization is a qualified charity and eligible for participation in this program, and we are now a registered charity participant on Amazon Smile. If you make purchases on Amazon as most of us do, you can now make purchases via Amazon Smile and can select LCWRT as the charity to receive 0.5% of the amount spent. This will cost you absolutely nothing! Basically, members make purchases at Amazon Smile, instead of Amazon. On Amazon Smile, you can designate LCWRT as your charity. Once every quarter, the accumulated money will be deposited into our Chase Bank account.

What Is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile offers all of the same items, prices, and benefits of its sister website, Amazon.com, but with one distinct difference. When you shop on AmazonSmile, the retailer's Foundation contributes 0.5% of eligible purchases to the LCWRT. AmazonSmile can be a bit confusing for first-time users. Here are some things to remember.

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Once signed into smile.amazon.com, you will be prompted to pick a charity. You will type LCWRT in the search box and then select LCWRT when prompted. Once you do that, a percentage of your purchase price on most, but not all, items will be donated to the charity of your choice. You must remember to go to smile.amazon.com each time you shop for all of this to work. Once you pick LCWRT as your charity, smile will remember this, and you do not have to select it every time you log on. There is absolutely no cost to use smile. You will pay the exact same amount for purchases as you would using regular Amazon. Your Prime account will still ship eligible Prime items free of charge.

How does my donation work?

If you purchase an item for \$100, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchase. The purchase price is the amount paid for the item minus any rebates and excluding shipping & handling, gift-wrapping fees, taxes, or service charges. So, this will translate into \$.50 being donated to the LCWRT. $\$100 \times .005 = .50$ or 50 cents. It seems like a small amount and it is, but with enough of our members using AmazonSmile, it will add up over time.

Are AmazonSmile Contributions Tax Deductible?

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There is no cost to charities or customers, and 100% of the donation generated from eligible purchases goes to the consumer's charity of choice.

Help Save Core Battlefield Land in the Wilderness

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust is continuing a long-time partnership with American Battlefield Trust to assist with the final fundraising to save 36 acres of the Wilderness Battlefield!

In 2019, the American Battlefield Trust began preservation work on an important 36-acre tract on the Wilderness Battlefield. With the closing deadline looming on April 2, 2021, there's still \$49,000 left to raise to save this piece of historic land. When President David Duncan from American Battlefield Trust called to see if Central Virginia Battlefields Trust could raise half of the remaining funds (just \$24,500), CVBT's President Tom Van Winkle responded with a hearty "yes!"

The 36-acre tract sits near the western edge of the National Park, bordering State Route 20 (Orange Turnpike) and hemmed in by Lake of the Woods subdivision to the north and privately held tracts to the west and east. The land is within the designated Core Battlefield Area and was a key point for the unfolding combat in Saunders' Field on May 5, 1864.

Through your generous support, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust is rallying to raise our portion to help the American Battlefield Trust close on this tract of hallowed ground. **We need to raise \$24,500 by April 2 to fulfill this commitment and join our resources to the grants and fundraising already in place to "swing and close the gap," making the difference between "history saved forever" or land lost to continued development.**

In the opening battle of the Overland Campaign, the Federal V Corps pushed down the Orange Turnpike on May 5, 1864, meeting Confederate resistance as General Robert E. Lee hustled divisions into defensive positions. Brigadier General Joseph Bartlett's brigade from Griffin's Division lined up along the turnpike on the east side of a piece of open ground called Saunders' Field.

The charge plunged across the field under heavy fire and crashed through the Confederate lines held by General Jones's Virginians in the Second Corps near the crest of the high ground on the south side of the turnpike. In the Confederate rear reserve, Brigadier General Cullen A. Battle readied his command of Alabama regiments, the 5th, 3rd, 6th, 61st, and 12th. His men positioned on the northern side of the road (across the exact tract of land that we need to preserve). At this juncture, Battle's brigade moved up at a double-quick. Surprised to find Jones's men scurrying in retreat, the majority of the Alabama Brigade swung like a door, sweeping across the Orange Turnpike and slamming into the advancing regiments of Bartlett's brigade. The 6th and 61st Alabama near the center of the Confederate line captured two artillery pieces and many prisoners.

This 36-acre tract of core battlefield land is where General Battle's Alabamians started on their swinging maneuver that blocked Bartlett's advance along the turnpike. National Park historian Bert Dunkerly has observed: "The acquisition of this land would preserve the site of a Confederate counterattack, where no doubt casualties occurred. It would also help protect the western boundary of the National Park Service property along Route 20 from development."

Help us save this piece of historic battlefield!

<https://www.cvbt.org/wilderness> DONATE

FEBRUARY 2021 QUIZ:

1. Who was General Ulysses S. Grant's Chief of Staff during the Civil War?
Colonel, and later Brigadier General, John Aaron Rawlins of Galena, Illinois, served as General Grant's Chief of Staff for most of the Civil War and was present in the McLean parlor at Appomattox Court House when General Lee surrendered.
2. Before commanding a division of garrison troops in the Richmond, Virginia defenses in mid 1864, what was Robert E. Lee's eldest son General George Washington Custis Lee's position in the Confederate Army?
Custis Lee was assigned as Aide-de-Camp to Confederate President Jefferson Davis with the rank of Colonel.
3. What famous essayist, humorist, and short story writer served with the Ninth Indiana Division during the Civil War?
Ambrose Bierce served throughout the war first in the infantry and later as a staff officer.
4. During the Civil War, what was a "gabion"?
It was a wicker basket filled with earth and used in fortifications.
5. Where was the greatest Union supply base of the war located?
It was located at City Point (Hopewell), Virginia.

MARCH 2021 QUIZ:

1. Who was the last Civil War veteran to serve as President of the United States?
2. Actually five United States Presidents served in the Civil War. What did they all have in common besides this service?
3. What was the first significant Union victory of the Civil War?
4. Who was second-in-command of Confederate forces at the Battle of Shiloh?
5. What was the Swamp Angel?

The Quiz is prepared by Harriette Weatherbee

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Attest:

**John Davis
Adjutant**

By Order of:

**Dave Hoffmann
President**