

THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



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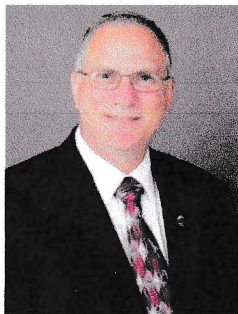
May 21, 2026 Program

Calvary Operations at Gettysburg

Presented by

Dr. Peter Mansoor

This month we welcome Peter Mansoor, Ph.D., to the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table. Dr. Mansoor is a retired United States Army



officer, military historian, and commentator on National security affairs in the media.

After graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1982, Mansoor served in a variety of command and staff positions. In the early 1990s he attended graduate school at The Ohio State University, after which he taught military history at West Point. During this period, he authored a monograph on the combat performance of U.S. Army infantry divisions in Europe during World War II. *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945* was awarded the Society for Military History distinguished book award and the

Army Historical Society distinguished book award in 2000.

Colonel Mansoor commanded the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division from 2003 to 2005, including 13 months in combat in Iraq from July 2003 to July 2004 - service for which his brigade was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for collective valor in combat. After relinquishing command, Colonel Mansoor resided at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York as a senior military fellow. He then served as the founding director of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where he helped to edit the counterinsurgency field manual, which was used to reshape the conduct of the Iraq War. In the fall of 2006, he also served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff Council of Colonels that reexamined the strategy for the war in Iraq. He finished his military service as executive officer to General David Petraeus, the Commanding General of Multi-National Force-Iraq, during the period of the surge in 2007-2008. He has authored a history of this period, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War*.

Dr. Mansoor is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Alpha Theta. He has recently completed *Redemption, MacArthur and the*

Campaign of the Philippines, a monograph on the liberation of the Philippines during World War II.

Currently, Dr. Mansoor is a professor at The Ohio State University, where he holds the General Raymond E. Mason Jr. Chair of Military History.

*Submitted by Dan Bauer,
Program Chair*

President's Letter

Our next meeting, the final meeting of the current season, is important for organizational matters and the future of our Round Table. Article II of our Constitution and By-Laws requires that the election of Officers and Trustees take place at our annual meeting, and Article V requires the annual meeting to take place in May. There are seven officers elected annually and two trustees serving two-year terms, with one elected every other year. (The last page of the *Canister* lists the positions and current incumbents.) A proposed slate of candidates will be presented. It will look a lot like the current composition of the Board, but it is important to keep in mind that any member may nominate themselves or anyone else for consideration. Anyone willing to devote some time to our management concerns is welcome, and a candidate for the Secretary position is needed. The annual meeting is also a forum for discussion of anything else that is relevant to the future of the Round Table. So please take care to join us at our May meeting and participate in our organization's business matters.

The featured speaker in May will be Dr. Peter Mansoor, the General Raymond E. Mason, Jr. Chair in Military History at The Ohio State University. His topic will be "Union and Confederate Cavalry Operations in the Gettysburg Campaign." I have read three of Dr. Mansoor's books: *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Commander's War in Iraq*, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus* and the

Remaking of the Iraq War and *Redemption, MacArthur and the Campaign for the Philippines*. I can attest to their high quality and insight and recommend them highly. Please join us for what promises to be an excellent and interesting presentation.

Interesting Civil War events in May:

- May 10, 1861 – Riot in St. Louis. Union forces under Capt. Nathaniel Lyon



surrounded and captured the pro-Confederate State Militia at Camp Jackson in St. Louis, where armaments were stored. Lyon's motive was to keep these items from secessionist groups. The state forces

surrendered peacefully, but when the prisoners were marched through the city, an angry mob attacked the Union soldiers, leading to chaotic gunfire that killed 28 civilians and wounded dozens more. The incident led to several days of panic and unrest and ruined Missouri's attempts to remain neutral. Citizens began to pick sides, which resulted in increased volunteers for the Union cause. Lyon was later promoted to brigadier general and at Wilson's Creek on August 10, 1861, became the first Union general officer to die in battle.

- May 1861 – Arkansas officially seceded from the Union on May 6, as did North Carolina on May 20. Virginia had done so in April, and Tennessee's formal secession in June completed the 11-state Confederate States of America.
- May 5, 1862 – Battle of Williamsburg. This was the first set-piece battle of the Peninsula Campaign in which approximately 41,000 Union and 32,000 Confederates were engaged. Following the Confederate retreat from Yorktown, the battle began when Brig. Gen. Joseph Hooker's division encountered Confederate forces near Williamsburg. Hooker

unsuccessfully attacked Fort Magruder. Then, Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's command moved against the federal left flank, but Union Brig. Gen. Philip Kearny's division blocked the rebels. The final move of the battle was by Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock, who moved his brigade to threaten the Confederate left flank. Hancock's local success was not exploited, and the Confederate army continued its withdrawal toward Richmond. Although the Northern press portrayed the matter as a federal triumph – Maj. Gen. George McClellan called it a “brilliant victory” – the battle was actually a delaying action by the Confederates which successfully enabled the bulk of the Southern army to reach Richmond. Union casualties were approximately 2,300 and 1,700 for the Confederates.

- May 5, 1863 – Arrest of Clement Vallandigham. The previous month, Maj. Gen Ambrose Burnside, commanding the Department of the Ohio, had issued General Order No. 38. Among other things, the order attempted to make it illegal to criticize the war: “The habit of declaring



sympathies for the enemy will no longer be tolerated in the department. Persons committing such offenses will at once be arrested...” Vallandigham, who formerly represented

Ohio's 3rd District (Dayton area) in the U.S House of Representatives, gave a speech on May 1 in which he said the war was no longer being fought to save the union but had become “King Lincoln's” attempt to free the slaves by sacrificing the liberty of white Americans. After his arrest he was quickly tried and convicted by a military commission and sentenced to imprisonment for the remainder of the war. Rather than send him to jail, however, President Lincoln on May 19 ordered him to

be sent through enemy lines to the Confederacy. While in exile Vallandigham lost the Ohio gubernatorial election in a landslide in November 1863. He died in 1871 in Lebanon, Ohio while serving as defense counsel in a homicide case. At trial, while trying to demonstrate that the victim may have accidentally shot himself while drawing a pistol from a pocket, Vallandigham shot himself in his abdomen and died the next day. I couldn't find the verdict in this trial.

- May 4, 1864 – Wade-Davis Reconstruction Bill was passed by the House of Representatives. Opposed by President Lincoln, this bill contained strict punitive measures, which, if enacted, would destroy the president's more moderate reconstruction plans. The bill later passed both houses of Congress but was pocket



vetoed by Lincoln. It never went into effect. The bill was proposed by Ohio Senator Benjamin Wade (pictured on the left) and Maryland Congressman Henry Davis (on the right). Among other things, the bill sought to require 50% of a seceded state's voters (as opposed to Lincoln's proposed 10%) to pledge allegiance to the union prior to reunification. It also took away voting rights from anyone who fought for the Confederacy and proposed military governors for the seceded states until they met conditions for self-government.

- May 23 & 24, 1865 – Grand Review of the Union Armies. In a massive two-day victory



parade, up to 200,000 Union soldiers marched down

Pennsylvania Avenue before President Andrew Johnson and Lt. Gen. Ulysses Grant. On May 23 Maj. Gen. George Meade led the Army of the Potomac, and the next day Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman guided his western troops on the same route. The parade featured artillery batteries, cavalry, and infantry regiments with soldiers marching many abreast. Viewers were struck by the precision marching of the eastern army and the more casual western army. It was the final gathering of the Union's two main armies before they were mustered out of service and returned home.

Submitted by Tom Robisch, President

Rare Book Find

A big THANK YOU is extended to member Gene Goes. Some months ago, Gene won the monthly book raffle and picked out a tome entitled *J. Wilkes Booth* by Thomas Jones, originally published in 1893. Gene said the book was quite old but in good shape, and he thought it might be a collector's item. So, he put it up on eBay. After a few months it sold for considerably more than his winning raffle ticket cost. Gene has generously donated the proceeds back to the Round Table.

Cincinnati CWRT Meeting Details

Location	Raffel's Evendale Banquet Center, 10160 Reading Rd., Evendale, OH 45241
Date	Thursday, May 21, 2026
Time	5:30 Sign-in and Social 6:30 Buffet Dinner 7:15 Business Meeting 7:30 Speaker
Time Reservations	You MUST make a reservation if you would like Dinner . Please Email reservations to: CinCWRTreservations@gmail.com Or Call, or text Jeff Mikutis, Vice President: 937-623-4879 Reservation Deadline Sunday, May 17, 2026
Cost	Dinner, meeting and speaker – \$30.00 Meeting and speaker only – \$7.00 . No reservations are required.
Cancellations	We are charged for the number of dinners called in to Raffel's after the deadline. You will be charged if you do not cancel by the reservation deadline, unless a late-comer can be substituted.

Future Speakers for Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

September 17, 2026 **Battle of Big Bethel**,
by Erick Bush

October 15, 2026 **Burnside's East
Tennessee and Knoxville Campaigns**,
by Steve Phan, NPS

November 19, 2026 To be determined, by
Kevin McCay

Future meeting dates in 2027: January 21,
February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20

Quiz

1. Joseph R. Davis, a Mississippi lawyer, born in Louisiana, served as a lieutenant colonel of the 10th Mississippi, an aide-de-camp to his uncle, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and later as a brigadier general in the Army of Northern Virginia. He was a proud alumnus of what institution of higher learning?



Joseph R. Davis

2. The purpose of the "reveille" and "taps" bugle calls is well known. What was the name of the cavalry bugle call summoning the troops for march or combat?
3. If one paid \$5,000 to \$10,000 to the Confederate government and obtained a letter of marque signed by Pres. Jefferson Davis, what would the holder of that letter be authorized to do?

4. This Confederate general often donned a red calico hunting shirt when a battle was about to start, and the men under his command would pass the word, "Little Powell's got on his battle shirt!" and begin to check their weapons.

5. Union general pictured here, who



commanded XVI Corps in the Atlanta Campaign, was shot in the head by a Confederate sharpshooter while looking through an eyehole in the Union breastworks.

6. Laura Arnold was a strong Unionist. While her brother fought for the Confederacy, Laura opened her home in Beverly to Union soldiers and spent long days nursing the



wounded from the West Virginia battle of Rich Mountain. Her Union support so angered her Copperhead husband, Jonathan, that he physically assaulted and threatened to kill her. Union officials arrested Jonathan ostensibly for spying but just as likely to

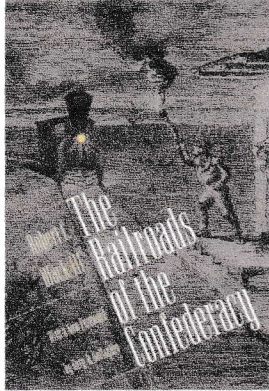
protect Laura. When Laura learned of her brother's death, she was distressed but reportedly said that she would rather know that he was dead than to have him a leader in the rebel army. Who was her brother?

7. Which state was the last to secede from the Union?
8. Who was the governor of Texas at the time of secession?

Book Review

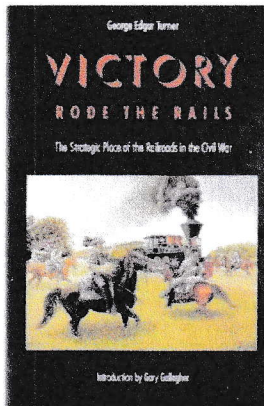
The Railroads of the Confederacy

by Robert C. Black III, *The University of North Carolina Press*, 1998, 360 pages, hardbound
\$40.00/paperback \$30.00;



Victory Rode the Rails

by George Edgar Turner, *The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.*, 1953, hardbound
\$21.95/paperback 9.99.



Having reviewed last month Bond's *Stealing the General*, you may have gathered I'm not only a Civil War buff, but also a railroad enthusiast as well. From the early age of four traveling with my grandmother from Washington, DC to Memphis, trains have been another of my passions.

Where these two interests of mine intersect again are in two significant tomes. One is Black's *The Railroad of the Confederacy*. The other is Turner's *Victory Rode the Rails*. Each of these books gives a different perspective on the iron horse and why it was a significant factor in the North winning (versus the South losing) the American Civil War.

With regard to Black's *The Railroads of the Confederacy*, the extensive maps alone located at the beginning are worth having this tome in your Civil War library. It gives a thorough exposition of the importance of the railroad network specifically to the Confederacy, as well as how it neglected to pay enough attention to this important part of its infrastructure. By contrast, Turner's *Victory Rode the Rails* provides an alternative, more Union centric view of why the North did a better job than the South in utilizing this significant mode of transportation to win this conflict. If you want to understand why railroads were highly important to the success (as well as failure) of the respective sides in America's most costly conflict in terms of lives and fortunes lost, these two books are a *must have* for your Civil War library bookshelf.

Submitted by Eric Guttag,
Publicity & Membership



Quiz Answers

1. Miami University, Oxford, OH. **M**
2. "Boots and Saddles."
3. The letter authorized ship owners (privateers) to attack United States shipping, both merchant vessels and warships.
4. A.P. Hill.



5. Grenville Dodge (1831 – 1916).
6. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. Jonathan and Laura Arnold divorced after the War.



7. Tennessee.
8. Sam Houston, who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederates of America.



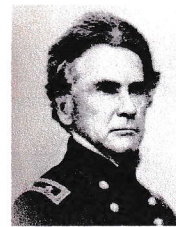
*The Quiz, the Quiz Answers and
Rare Book Find
were all written by
Dave Stockdale, Treasurer*

April Meeting

After dinner, the meeting was opened by President Tom Robisch. We had a special visitor, John Ventre, who is the Chairman of the "Save the Observatory" committee and the previous Director and Astronomer of Cincinnati Observatory, which was founded by Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel.

The quiz answers were given by Dave Stockdale, Quizmaster and Treasurer. Winners of the book raffle included our special guest, John Ventre. Program Chairperson, Dan Bauer, gave previews of coming attractions and introduced our speaker, Dr. Phil Shoemaker.

Dr. Shoemaker is a Mitchel scholar who gave us an outstanding, informative presentation. Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel was born in Kentucky in 1809 and was raised in Lebanon,



Ohio, having moved there with his family at the age of three after the death of his father. He graduated from West Point in 1829, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 2nd U.S. Artillery, but remained at West Point to teach

mathematics as an assistant professor. While there, he met and married Louisa, later fathering seven children. Mitchel performed the survey for the Philadelphia to Norristown Railroad. Ordered to join his regiment, he and his family moved to Florida. While there, he was admitted to the Florida Bar. After a year of garrison duty, he resigned his commission and moved to Cincinnati.

In Cincinnati, he passed the Ohio Bar, became a lawyer, and opened a practice. He started the Mitchel School for Boys. He also secured a position as Professor of Mathematics, Philosophy and Astronomy at Cincinnati College (now the University of Cincinnati). He became famous as a lecturer in Astronomy and founded the Mitchel Observatory (Cincinnati Observatory). He was its first director and his original telescope is still in use. He became the

chief engineer for the construction of the Little Miami Railroad. He was the surveyor for the Cincinnati to St Louis Railroad.

In 1859 Mitchel and his family moved to Albany, New York, where he accepted a position as an astronomer. Soon thereafter, Mitchel's wife became very ill and died in 1861. He was commissioned a Brigadier General, initially assigned to command the Department of Ohio. After General Don Carlos Buell received that command, General Mitchel was assigned the command of the 3rd Division of the Army of the Ohio.

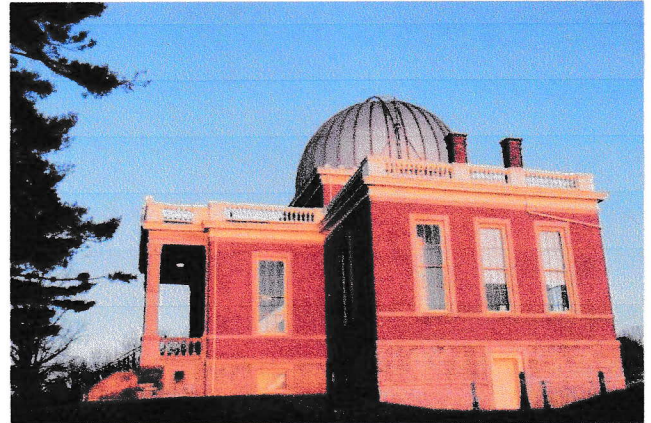
General Mitchel had many military triumphs: Murfreesboro and Shelbyville, Tennessee, Huntsville, Alabama. Those victories severed the Mississippi and Charleston Railroad that linked the Mississippi River to the East. Mitchel's men reconstructed a long railroad bridge in nine days, which included cutting trees and sawing the beams. Later he was ordered to destroy it. He authorized Andrew's Raid, the attempt to disable the Western and Atlanta Railroad that was portrayed in the famous "Great Locomotive Chase."

Mitchel was eloquent, outspoken and militarily aggressive. He clashed with his commander, Gen. Don Carlos Buell on many occasions. General Buell's idea was a well-fortified defense that, if attacked, would lose few men and battles. General Mitchel believed that by attacking with skill, speed and daring, using his railroad skills for rapid movement and construction of bridges, he would have many successes. General Buell was unmoved and undid some of his accomplishments. Another disagreement was about not seizing the opportunity to capture Chattanooga.

There was also a major disagreement over the escaped slaves joining the Union forces. He recognized the military value of Black men as soldiers and advocated full citizenship for Black men. Mitchel advocated giving the escaped farm instruments and land. He called his plan the "Plantation Plan."

When Mitchel attempted to resign, his resignation was rejected and he was promoted to Major General commanding the 10th Army Corp and the Department of the South. He was transferred to the South Carolina islands. Unfortunately, he contracted yellow fever and died soon after his arrival there.

*Respectfully submitted,
Esly Caldwell, II
Trustee (acting as Secretary)*



The Cincinnati Observatory

Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

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Speakers Bureau: Tom Breiner	513-382-1412	tbreiner@fuse.net
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*The **CANISTER** is regularly published eight times per year, in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, and November; sometimes more often, if we have a lot to say to our members.*