



THE drum roll

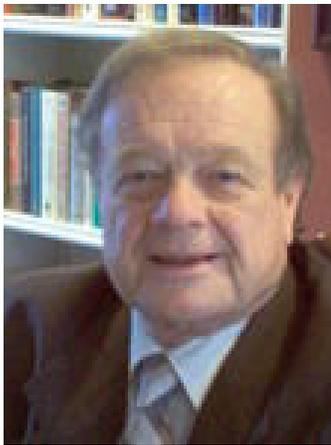
Volume 36 348th Regular Meeting
Number 7 March 2, 2018

Backing the boys in Chicago

Friday, March 2, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Arlington Heights Historical Museum
110 West Fremont Street, Arlington Heights, Illinois

Chicago During the Civil War



Kurt Carlson

On March 2nd, 2018, our speaker will be Kurt Carlson, who will speak on how Chicago businesses and industries supported the war effort and how it changed Chicago forever. The talk is based on an article that was originally published in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*.

Carlson is past president of the Chicago Civil War Round Table and the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table and has spoken at several Civil War round tables. He is an active member of our own Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table and a practicing attorney in Wheaton, Illinois.

If you would like to join us for dinner with Kurt Carlson at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting on March

2 at Sam's of Arlington restaurant, 1863 West Central Road, Arlington Heights, please contact Pat McCormick at splat991691@gmail.com or (708) 306-5966 by Wednesday, February 28. —
Wayne Rhine

March Saturday Discussion

All members and guests are invited to participate in the session to be held at the Barrington Area Library, 505 North Northwest Highway, Barrington, on Saturday, March 17, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The topic will be Fort Fisher and Charleston Harbor.

These discussions are generally held on the third Saturday of the month from September through June. They are held to generate and foster a free exchange of ideas on Civil War events.

Women's Civil War Book Club

The Civil War book club for women will meet at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 21, at the home of Connie Rawa, 1961 Jamestown Drive, Palatine, to discuss *The Smoke at Dawn* by Jeff Shaara. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Denise Limburg at dlimburg@prodigy.net or telephone (847) 382-1022 or Mary Banks at (847) 497-3149 or zeller1@comcast.net.

Eisenhower Library Discussion

The Civil War discussion group at the Eisenhower Library, 4613 North Oketo Avenue, Harwood Heights, meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 until 11:30 a.m. On March 3 the group will discuss the battle for Ringgold Gap and the Knoxville Campaign..

The March meeting will be at the Arlington Heights Historical Museum

Conscription in the Civil War

By Pat McCormick

The Civil War produced quite a few “firsts” for the United States. On February 2, 2018, Bruce Allardice presented the story of one notable “first” for America: the military draft.

Conscription was not new to the world, and Allardice first covered the history of the concept. The earliest military draft was in Sweden in the 1600s, but it was relatively limited. The first mass conscription was during the French Revolution and its aftermath. Napoleon conquered much of Europe with an army largely composed of draftees, some 2 million in all (the balance were the more traditional European soldiers, professionals and mercenaries). The rich could buy out of the draft. It was reasoned that the wealthy would find a way to avoid it anyway, so why not get some cash for support of the war effort in the process? Others avoided the draft illegally, and by 1814 there were tens of thousands of draft dodgers in hiding. Others would try to make themselves medically unable to serve. A common dodge was to knock out one’s front teeth, leaving him unable to tear cartridges open with his teeth.

By 1861, universal conscription was in place in most of Europe (England being an exception). In fact, conscription was one powerful impetus for emigration to the United States, where it was not yet in place. The Founding Fathers were distrustful of a standing army, due not only to the general history of the concept but to their own experience living under the rule of a regular British army, and it was with some difficulty that a regular U.S. Army was established.

The establishment of a draft was considered an element of tyranny — “obnoxious to a free people.” During the Revolution there was no conscription at a national level. (Virginia did have a state-wide militia draft, but that is a different matter.) The idea of a national draft was considered, but the need for such a step evaporated when the

French joined the war on the colonists’ side. The War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War were fought with regulars and volunteers.

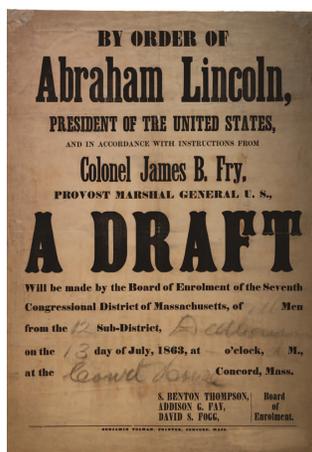
At the outbreak of war in 1861, this pattern continued. All soldiers either were members of the small regular army or were volunteers, the overwhelming majority being the latter. Most expected the conflict to be brief, and in fact (after the initial rush of 3-month enlistments) most 1861 terms of service were for 1 year. This system

proved to be inadequate, and soon even the calls for 3-year service were falling short. As a result, both combatants eventually turned to conscription — an idea previously repulsive to American citizens.

Perhaps surprisingly, the “States Rights” Confederacy was the first to institute a draft. (The Confederacy also automatically extended the terms of the 1-year 1861 enlistments.) The Confederates’ First Draft Act was passed on April 16, 1862. Males from the ages of 18 to 35 were eligible initially; in September 1862 the upper

limit was raised to 45, and in 1864 the range was extended in both directions, from 17 to 50. There were exceptions: elected officials, newspaper editors and printers, clergy, teachers, doctors, overseers, non-citizens, and war industry workers. (The number of clergy and office-holders — not coincidentally — multiplied overnight. Georgia governor Joseph Brown was one of the worst offenders insofar as increasing government posts to reduce the impact of the draft.) Medical exemptions were possible, and paying for substitutes also was allowed.

The Union Draft Act was passed March 3, 1863. Males 20 to 45 years old were eligible, and there were fewer exemptions than in the Southern draft: physical/mental impairments, widowers with dependent children, and only sons of a widow. As with the Confederate draft, hiring a substitute was allowed, and the Northern law went



A conscription poster

one step further: it revived the Napoleonic practice of buying out of the draft, for a \$300 commutation fee.

This aspect of the conscription law, in particular, proved highly unpopular, leading to cries about “rich man’s war, poor man’s fight.” (Such protests were not confined to the North; the overseer exemption, in particular, was highly unpopular in the Confederacy and was gradually modified.) The commutation fee was abolished in 1864. Nonetheless, the Union draft led to resistance, often violent; the 1863 New York draft riot was far and away the most well-known (and by far the most destructive of life and property) but lesser incidents were spread across the country. Many others avoided the draft by fleeing to the West, or to Canada (sound familiar?).

The Northern draft served primarily as an impetus to volunteering. Individual states were assigned quotas; any volunteers they provided would count against conscription, so if a state could fill its quota with volunteers, the unpopular draft would be unnecessary. Most if not all states offered bounties to volunteers, or for re-

enlistment of veterans. Sometimes local governments would sweeten the pot as well; prospective volunteers could shop around for the best payouts. The system also gave rise to the bounty jumper, who would enlist (collecting his bounty), desert, and re-enlist elsewhere under another name. Some were able to do this several times before being caught. To counter this fraud, eventually the bounty was withheld until the honorable discharge — or death — of the enlistee.

As it developed, very few drafted soldiers actually saw service — only some 6 percent of Union combat soldiers were conscripts. On the other hand, over 800,000 men joined the U.S. Army as volunteers after the draft was instituted. The Confederate draft had an impact that is sometimes overlooked: The Rebel high tide of fall 1862 — the only time in the war when the Confederacy was on the offensive across a broad front — was during the time period when the South had instituted the draft and the North had yet to do so.

On behalf of the round table, I would like to thank Bruce Allardice for his fascinating tour of Civil War conscription.

March Events

Through April 8, Through British Eyes: The Illustrated London News Sketches of the American Civil War, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. A selection of original images of the American Civil War that were produced by artists for *The Illustrated London News* will be on display. Subjects include Northern and Southern military and political leaders, soldiers in camp and battle, and naval vessels, as well as African-American slaves, free. Information on all Civil War Museum programs is available at www.thecivilwarmuseum.org or (262) 653-4140.

March 9, Second Friday Lecture Series, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Rev. Robert Miller will speak on Faith of the Fathers — the Courage, Humor and Dedication of Catholic Civil War Chaplains, noon. Free program is sponsored by the Milwaukee Civil War Roundtable and the Iron Brigade Association.

March 9, Chicago Civil War Round Table. Robert Jenkins will speak on Peach Tree Creek.

March 10, Civil War Expo, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Living history, heritage groups and Civil War round tables from around the Midwest will present samples of their programming and provide information to the public on their organizations, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., free.

March 10, Civil War Trivia Day, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Teams of 2–3 Civil War buffs will compete at trivia. Each team must bring its own tablet or smart phone, 1 p.m., free.

March 13, McHenry County Civil War Round Table. Members will review their favorite or most recent reads.

March 17, Salt Creek Civil War Round Table. Brian Conroy will speak on Military Academies During the Civil War.

March 21, Rank Discord, Civil War Museum, Kenosha, WI. Robert Girardi will examine relationships between a number of generals and how these relationships shaped the events of the war; 6:30–8:30 p.m.; \$25, \$20 Friends of the Museum.



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Book Raffle	Charles Banks
Newsletter Editor	Sally Smith

February Raffle

The lucky winners at the February book raffle were Janet Linhart, who won *Upton and the Army* by Stephen E. Ambrose; Dan Cicero, who won *The U. S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam* by Jay Juvaas; Danielle Kafka, who won *A Day with Mr. Lincoln*; Mary Banks, who won *Rebels in Blue* by Peter F. Stevens; and Wayne Rhine, who won *The Man Behind the Guns* by Edward G. Longacre.

Congratulations to the winners and sincere thanks to the donors.

Roster Changes

New members

Ms. Connie Rawa
e-mail connie796@comcast.net

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth and and Audrey Tokarz

2017-2018 Speakers

April 6	Daniel Weinberg	Facts About Abraham Lincoln
May 4	Jonathan Sebastian	The 1862 Mid-term Elections
June 1	Max and Donna Daniels	An Evening with President and Mrs. Lincoln



To learn more about the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table
visit our website at www.northernilcwr.org