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# General Orders

## *Altavilla's Brigade*

Vol. 35  
No. 4  
Nov.  
2023



**NOVEMBER, 2023 MEETING**  
**Thursday, November 16, 2023**

**Rudi Lechner's Restaurant**  
**2503 South Gessner Road**  
**6:00 (or sooner) Dinner**  
**7:00 Program Begins**

**E-mail reservations are preferred. Please**  
**e-mail Barry Brueggeman at**  
**[bgbrueg@aol.com](mailto:bgbrueg@aol.com) or call 281 480-1130**  
**by 6 pm Monday, November 13, 2023**

**\*\*\* Reservations are Required \*\*\***

**There is no cost for dues-paid members.**  
**\$10.00 charge for visitors.**

**The HCWRT Presents**  
**Barbara Gannon speaking on:**

**“The Won Cause: Black and White**  
**Comradeship in the Grand Army”**

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest and most powerful Union Army's veterans' group, was an interracial organization and not, as some scholars believe, a racially segregated group. Because Black and white soldiers had served together in the Civil War for the Won Cause, or Union Cause, most white veterans believed that their organization should include African American veterans as their political equals in the GAR. To the white and

Black GAR members, the Won Cause represented their victory in a war, resulting in the Union being saved and the abolishment of slavery. Moreover, the memory of their shared suffering in the Civil War to achieve this victory inspired interracial comradeship and allowed Black and white veterans to overcome racial separation in an era defined by the color line. No other nineteenth-century social organization granted Black Americans this status.



*Barbara Gannon*

While the existence of all-Black local organizations known as posts suggests the GAR was segregated, African Americans created these organizations; they were not forced into all-Black organizations by their white counterparts. Black posts formed in the vast majority of urban areas with enough Black veterans to sustain a post and, together with their women's auxiliary organizations, these groups played a vital role in the life of the local

African American community. The single most critical function of these organizations was to fight the efforts of those who would forget slavery and the Black military experience in the Civil War.

The notion that the GAR was a segregated group is put to rest by the existence of hundreds of integrated posts in cities and towns across the United States. While GAR officials encouraged interracial posts, joining a predominantly white post was sometimes difficult because only a handful of white members could reject a Black applicant. Despite these challenges, African Americans affiliated with predominantly white posts in large and small cities alike. These integrated grass roots organizations represent the finest achievement of this interracial coalition that preserved the Union and freed the enslaved.

## About Barbara Gannon

Barbara A. Gannon is a professor of history at the University of Central Florida (UCF). She received her B.A. from Emory University, an M.A. from George Washington University, and a Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University. She is the author of *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (UNC Press, 2011). This book received the Wiley-Silver Prize (University of Mississippi) for the best first book in Civil War History. It also received an honorable mention from the Lincoln Prize (Gilder Lehrman Institute) jury in 2012. She published her second book *Americans Remember their Civil War* (Praeger) in 2017. Dr. Gannon has authored several articles and essays on the Civil War, its memory, and American veterans. These articles include a study of an African American woman who served with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Indiana, the Mississippi Valley Campaign before Vicksburg, and the First Battle at Bull Run. In addition to her research, she is the coordinator of the UCF Community Veterans History Project, an oral history project recording the experiences of Florida's veterans. Her current project involves the Battle of Olustee, the largest Civil War battle in Florida, where the Union dead remain near

where they fell on the battlefield in an unmarked grave. Dr. Gannon is a veteran of the United States Army.



## PRESIDENT'S POST *By Keith Altavilla*

Happy November to everyone receiving or reading this newsletter. Hopefully by this point you have renewed your membership for another year. Certainly, the board and I are thankful for that, as your memberships keep us going both financially, but we also appreciate your presence at meetings and continuing interest in the Civil War.

Jen Murray gave a fantastic talk about George Meade, and after that I'm sure many of us are looking forward to that biography when it comes out. This month we have another first-time guest in Houston: Barbara Gannon will be speaking on her book about Black veterans in the Grand Army of the Republic. It is another night you won't want to miss.

A couple of announcements. First, congratulations to Dru Sanders of Rice University on winning our first graduate student award. He and his talk will be part of our December meeting, and is now listed on the schedule on page 6 of this newsletter. Second, our own Ed Cotham is leading several tours of Galveston, which should be a good time. For ticket information, see the Galveston Historical Society website at [galvestonhistory.org](http://galvestonhistory.org), then look under "Tickets." Ed is also ready and willing to lead a Round Table tour to a nearby site like Sabine Pass, but we need interest to make that happen. If that is something you may

be interested in doing, contact us so we can get a head count and see if this is viable.

Once again, I am looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting, and if we are lucky, that day will finally be under 90 degrees!

## NOVEMBER QUIZ

*By Mike Harrington*



What Federal commander of a division of Black troops at Petersburg remained behind the lines in a shelter, drinking rum, while his troops were fighting for their lives in the Battle of the Crater?

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*By Michael Glennan*

The distribution of our 2023 - 2024 promotional flyer is going well. Our members are urged to continue distributing this flyer to all interested parties, including civic clubs, professional groups, and universities. Dr. Gene recently gave a presentation to over 80 retired doctors regarding medical practices in the Civil War, and used this opportunity to distribute our flyers!

Our Programs Committee continues to consistently obtain outstanding speakers such as last month's speaker, Dr. Jennifer Murray. The original research she presented on General Meade was very enjoyable and engaging.

Please take the opportunity to invite family, friends and old members to our monthly fellowship. Our Round Table always has room for guests!

## BOOK RAFFLE

*By Rita Campbell*

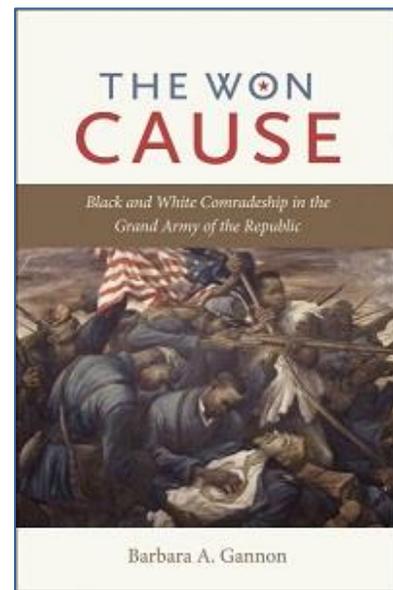
We have some excellent book selections this month, beginning with **BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM: THE CIVIL WAR ERA** by James McPherson. This copy is autographed by the author to former member Dale Toth. Next, we have **THE PRESIDENT AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTER** by Brian Kilmeade. This book, donated by Malcolm and Rita Campbell, is about how Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass moved from strong disagreement to friendship. We're also offering **BLOOD AND TREASURE: CONFEDERATE EMPIRE OF THE SOUTH** by Donald S. Frazier. This book is donated by the late Dr. Joe Goulding.



Other books being offered this month include **GRANT: A BIOGRAPHY** by William S. McFeely, **A WOMAN OF VALOR: CLARA BARTON AND THE CIVIL WAR** by Stephen B. Oates, and **DAYS OF DEFIANCE** by Maury Klein, a book which

offers fascinating new insights into the Civil War period.

Please be sure to purchase raffle tickets for your chance to win one of these great selections and support the HCWRT!



## 2023 – 2024 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Nov. 16, 2023	Barbara Gannon: “The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship In the Grand Army”
Dec. 14, 2023	Dru Sanders, Graduate Student Award Recipient: “Civil War Texas In Matamoros”
Jan. 18, 2024	Richard McCaslin: “Lee in the Shadow of Washington”
Feb. 15, 2024	Chris Mackowski, 2023 Vandiver Award Recipient: “Grant’s Next Chapter: Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and the Rise of U. S. Grant”
Mar. 21, 2024	Fay Yarbrough: “Choctaw Confederates: The American Civil War in Indian Country”
Apr. 18, 2024	Stephen Kinnaman: “The Abandonment and Destruction of the Gosport Navy Yard”
May 16, 2024	TBA: 2024 Vandiver Award Recipient

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