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# General Orders

## *Altavilla's Brigade*

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2023

**SEPTEMBER, 2023 MEETING**  
**Thursday, September 21, 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, September 18th, 2023**

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

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

### **The HCWRT Presents** **Brian Steel Wills speaking on:**

#### **“Parker’s Crossroads – Charging ‘em Both Ways: A Civil War Preservation Success Story”**

Nathan Bedford Forrest achieved one of his most dramatic achievements as a successful West Tennessee raid came to a close in December 1862. With a Union force blocking his return to relative safety and another approaching from behind, the cavalymen and his 1,800 troops were in danger of being trapped between them. Forrest drove the first force he encountered from their earliest positions and

was poised to bring about a surrender of those troops when the second force emerged. The first notion that Forrest had that something was amiss occurred when the Union advance scattered the Confederate horse holders from a grove. The “Wizard of the Saddle” had little time and opportunity to assess the situation, but in characteristic fashion reconnoitered personally to understand better the circumstances that he faced. He determined the only solution was to “charge ‘em both ways,” in order to neutralize both forces until he could slip out between them and make good his escape. The close call cost the Confederates some 300 men captured and an undetermined number of total casualties that Forrest listed at 163.

In subsequent years, Parker’s Crossroads enjoyed the benefit of being in a rural area, but became a victim of a different form of development when the interstate highway system passed directly through the battlefield in the 1960s. Since that time, the community has experienced growth and development as land has passed from original owners to heirs. To be sure, Interstate 40 remains a fixture as motorists pass to and from Memphis and Nashville, most oblivious to the fighting that occurred around them. However, the Parker’s Crossroads Battlefield Association formed in 1993 with a self-guided driving tour supported by an audiocassette providing information which became available the following year. A state grant in 2001 allowed the purchase and preservation of the first 56 acres of ground.

Today, thanks to the untiring efforts of former state representative Steve McDaniel and the American Battlefield Trust (then Civil War Trust)

and other partners, Parkers is among the best interpreted battlefields from the Civil War, with ample signage and a dedicated visitor's center/museum. In an interview posted on the American Battlefield Trust site, McDaniel explained, "Since 2001, 298 acres have been preserved to make up the current battlefield park," featuring "over two miles of paved walking trails with interpretative signs," and "a ten-mile self-guided driving tour with waysides." Since the humble beginnings, the on-going efforts to preserve ground have raised the preserved acreage to 396, while the city of Parker's Crossroads notes the presence of three miles of walking trails and 50 signs.



*Brian Steel Wills*

## About Brian Steel Wills

Brian Steel Wills is the Director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era and Professor of History at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. In addition to leading tours, offering lectures, and conducting programs, Dr. Wills is the award-winning author of numerous works relating to the American Civil War, including biographies of Confederate generals Nathan Bedford Forrest and William Dorsey Pender and Union general George Henry Thomas. He has also written about the Civil War in Virginia and in the movies, as well as a volume that focuses on noncombat deaths in the Civil War. His latest work is *Running the Race: The 'Public Face' of Charlton Heston*, published through Savas Beatie.

A graduate of the University of Richmond, Virginia and the University of Georgia, he spends time on his farm in Virginia when not teaching and working in Kennesaw.



## PRESIDENT'S POST

*By Keith Altavilla*

Welcome back and happy new campaign year! As I write this month's article, the forecast does show a high temperature finally coming down under 100 degrees. Summer is ending and with autumn upon us, I hope all of you are ready for another great campaign with the Round Table. Starting the year is our 2021 Vandiver Award recipient, Brian Steel Wills. As you would expect from such a prominent speaker, his talk on Parker's Crossroads will be about both the 1862 battle and the successful preservation efforts in the present day, essentially two talks in one.

A great speaker like this can be the perfect introduction to any guests. If you have a friend, family member, coworker, or anyone else who might have an interest in history and the Civil War, invite them to visit. Membership is what drives our organization, and we are always excited to welcome potential new members.

I also want to remind everyone that we are back at Rudi Lechner's this campaign year for some great German food. Those of you who have been there before know the room has limited space, so **make sure your reservation gets to Barry Bruggeman by 6 pm on Monday, September 18th.**

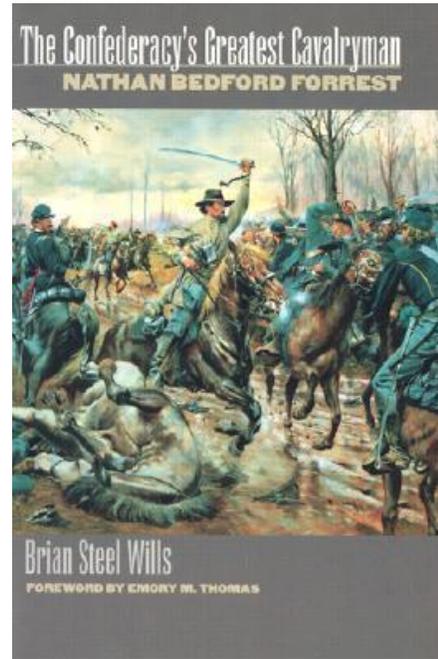
I am looking forward to seeing everyone back again soon!

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*By Michael Clennan*

RECRUITMENT TIME for the HCWRT! The Blue and Grey need more troops for the current campaign. Each of our 80 members (including you) are requested by President Keith to distribute at least three flyers to friends and groups around Houston now. Our new inspiring, professionally designed flyer for the 2023-2024 campaign contains all the necessary information regarding the Round Table.

Bring a friend along so they also can enjoy our monthly fellowship, hearty Germany dinner, a book raffle, and outstanding lecture about the Civil War. Help share the joy and expand our community, and remember to pick up some flyers at our September meeting from Mike, Barry or Keith.



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## HTBAR ANNUAL SCHOLARLY SEMINAR

Hood's Texas Brigade Re-Activated (HTBAR) is hosting its 2023 Scholarly Seminar on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas.

Featured speakers and their topics are Dr. Donald S. Frazier ("Tom Green, Texan"), Jeffrey W. Hunt ("Meade and Lee After Gettysburg: The Final Forgotten Stage of the Gettysburg Campaign"), Joseph L. Owen ("A Texan First: Color Sgt. George A. Branard, 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Infantry, Recalls the Civil War"), and Edward T. Cotham ("Civil War Naval Battles on the Texas Coast").

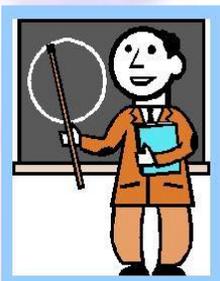
Friday night's event at Mamacitas Restaurant, which includes dinner and a speaker, is \$30.00. Saturday's event at Schreiner's Junkin Center features the above-referenced speakers and includes vendors and lunch. Saturday's fee is \$85.00.

For additional information, contact Martha Hartzog at [m.hartzog@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:m.hartzog@mail.utexas.edu) or (512) 431-2682. You can also visit the HTBAR website at [hoodstexasbrigade.org](http://hoodstexasbrigade.org).

## SEPTEMBER QUIZ

*By Jim Godlove*

Despite the near-disaster at Parker's Crossroads, General Forrest's Western Tennessee raid was quite successful. Along with the rebel capture of U. S. Grant's supply base at Holly Springs, the raid led to the failure of Grant's first attempt to take Vicksburg.



**Who was the Confederate commander that led the raid on Holly Springs?**

## 2023 – 2024 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Sept. 21, 2023	Brian Steel Wills: “Parker’s Crossroads: Charging ‘em Both Ways - A Civil War Preservation Success Story”
Oct. 19, 2023	Jennifer Murray: “The Victor of Gettysburg: George Gordon Meade and the Civil War”
Nov. 16, 2023	Barbara Gannon: “The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship of the Grand Army”
Dec. 14, 2023	Graduate student award winner
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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