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General Orders

Harrington's Brigade

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March
2020

MARCH, 2020 MEETING
Thursday, March 19, 2020

The HESS Club
5430 Westheimer Rd @ Westheimer Way
6:00 Cash Bar
6:45 Dinner & Meeting
7:30 Program Begins

E-mail reservations are preferred. Please E-mail Barry Brueggeman at bgbrueg@aol.com or call 281 480-1130 by 6 pm Monday, March 16, 2020

Dinner \$32.00, Lecture only \$10.00

*** Reservations are Required ***
FOR BOTH DINNER and LECTURE ONLY

The HCWRT Presents

Stephen Kinnaman Speaking on:

“Merrimack: Biography of a Steam Frigate”

The USS Merrimack has long been linked to the first duel of ironclads, an epic Civil War battle fought at Hampton Roads between the *Monitor* and *Merrimack*. But over time, the myth of the *Merrimack*—actually the CSS *Virginia*—displaced the memory of a magnificent antebellum U.S. Navy warship. The steam frigate *Merrimack* lost her identity. Nearly forgotten is the story of the original *Merrimack*, the namesake of a class of six powerful war steamers. When built, she was the largest vessel in the U.S. Navy, the nation's first screw-propelled frigate and the first major warship to be armed entirely with shell-firing guns. Her first commission took her on a tour of the principal

naval stations of Europe. During her second commission, she served as flagship of the Navy's Pacific Squadron, cruising the distant shores of Chile, Peru, Panama, Hawaii, Mexico and Nicaragua.

Through copious use of *Merrimack's* deck logs, official correspondence, contemporary newspapers and journals, and original construction plans, Stephen Kinnaman's research illuminates the mechanical issues and human interactions that indelibly shaped *Merrimack's* brief career. Mr. Kinnaman provides an unparalleled glimpse into the day-to-day events that defined the life of an active antebellum warship.

Many of the officers who served on the steam frigate would find their careers inextricably linked to *Merrimack*. Lieutenant Catesby Roger Jones, her gunnery officer, later commanded the Confederate Ironclad *Virginia*, a ship built from *Merrimack's* charred hull. Ashton Ramsay, the ironclad's chief engineer, had also served on *Merrimack* as did officers who later fought for the Union—Lieutenants Jonathan Wainwright, Joseph Smith, Daniel Ammen and Chief Engineer Alban Stimers. Their links to the Steam Frigate *Merrimack* breathe life into the tale of a true ship of destiny.



Stephen Kinnaman

But Mr. Kinnaman will provide more than just a summary of the ship's operational life. A professional engineer, he will dissect the origins of her design and compares the *Merrimack* class steam frigates to contemporary U.S. warships. He will also examine the controversy surrounding her troubled engines, documenting their performance using archived drawings and steam log data.

In summary, Mr. Kinnaman, in relating the story of this warship, embraces the many threads of a bygone era—history, biography, geography and technology—and has woven them together to tell the story of the U.S. Steam Frigate *Merrimack*.

About Stephen Kinnaman

Stephen Chapin Kinnaman has long had an abiding interest in ships and the sea. He is a naval architect and marine engineer, experienced in vessel design, marine operations and shipbuilding, and an alumnus of the University of Michigan and Cambridge University. Stephen's first career was in the offshore oil industry, where he worked as an international consultant to shipyards, rig operators, oil companies and engineering contractors. Lately he has pursued a second career as a naval historian focusing on navies of the Civil War era. Stephen has published three works of history: *Merrimack, The Biography of a Steam Frigate* (October 2018); *Captain Bulloch: The Life of James Dunwoody Bulloch, Naval Agent of the Confederacy* (August 2013); and *The Most Perfect Cruiser: How James Dunwoody Bulloch Constructed and Equipped the Confederate States Steamer Alabama* (March 2009). He is now writing his fourth book, a biography of the man who designed the Steam Frigate *Merrimack* and many other famous warships, Naval Constructor John Lenthall.

In pursuit of *Merrimack's* story, Stephen visited the National Archives in Washington, D.C. There he examined, page by page, the four volumes of *Merrimack's* log books spanning the entirety of her life as a commissioned U.S Navy warship. Details of her sea passages, the actions of her officers and crew, the performance of her machinery and descriptions of her ports of

call were all recorded on the logs' musty pages. Copies of letters from the secretary of the Navy to her captains and her captains' reports back to the Navy Department were also closely read and blended into Stephen's *Merrimack* narrative. The search for visual context led to the Navy's original plans for *Merrimack* which were copied and reproduced in his book. All these essential elements of the steam frigate's history have been woven together and brought to life in his book *Merrimack, The Biography of a Steam Frigate*.

Stephen Kinnaman and his wife Maureen Carroll live on their 'country place' in scenic Chappell Hill, Texas. Both Stephen and Maureen are proud members of the Houston Civil War Round Table.



COMMANDER'S CORNER *By Mike Harrington*

At Houston Civil War Round Table, we do not hear much about the war on blue water. And that's all the better reason for you to attend our March 19 meeting. At that meeting, we will welcome back as our speaker, Stephen Kinnaman, who is a widely-recognized expert on the history of the men and ships that fought the Civil War at sea.

Some of you who have been members of HCWRT for a few years will recall that Stephen Kinnaman spoke to us in February 2014 about his biography of James Dunwoody Bulloch, the Naval Agent of the Confederacy in Britain and, coincidentally, the uncle of President Teddy Roosevelt. His presentation was one of the most popular of the entire 2013-14 campaign. At

our upcoming meeting, Steve will speak to us about the Confederacy's first ironclad ship, the CSS *Virginia*, better known by its prior name, the USS *Merrimack*.

I urge you to mark your calendars for our May 21 meeting for two reasons. First, **Brian Steel Wills** will speak to us on noncombat deaths in the Civil War. Dr. Wills holds a chair in history at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, and he is the acclaimed biographer of Confederate Generals Nathan Bedford Forrest and William Dorsey Pender as well as Union General George Thomas. In addition, as those of you who have heard him speak already know, Dr. Wills is a lively, engaging speaker. Second, at that meeting **we will present Dr. Wills with our annual Frank E. Vandiver Award of Merit.** HCWRT has presented this award annually since 1982, and the presentation ceremony is the capstone of each campaign.

Switching subjects, the Board of Directors of HCWRT is in the process of selecting persons to serve as officers, directors and committee chairs for our next campaign. If you would like to join the leadership of your Round Table, by all means let one of our officers or directors hear from you. We need, and we earnestly solicit, new candidates for leadership.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Keith Altavilla

Hello everyone. Good to see members old and new in February for another great talk. I hope you are as excited as I am about Stephen Kinnaman's presentation this month. Stephen has been a member since last year, and is a great example of the great and varied expertise that all Round Table-goers bring to every meeting.

As always, we look for your help in recruitment to keep meetings full, give our great speakers the audiences their work deserves, and provide all of us the chance to make new friends. Ronald Gonzalez signed up at last month's meeting. Be sure to say hello next time, and give some thought to someone you might know that could be our next new member.

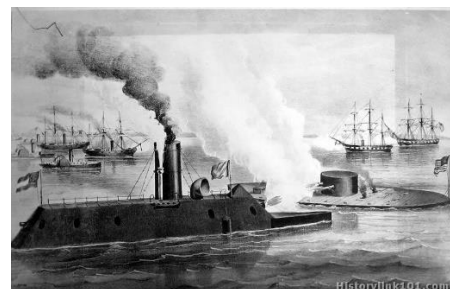
One last reminder as we get into March: any new members who sign up through May get their membership not only through the rest of this campaign, but also through 2020-21 as well. Soon we'll start the membership drive for renewals, so be sure to save up. You won't want to miss all that is coming starting in September. Even if you aren't sure about making a meeting each month, it never hurts to get the newsletter as a reminder, and a helpful hint regarding the monthly quiz. Your membership dues are also what allows us to bring speakers in from across the country, giving us reasons to gather every month.

We can still get some extra pamphlets to continue the Round Table's advertising efforts around Houston. If you know somewhere that would benefit from learning about the Round Table, just ask us for a couple before they get too out-of-date for the first part of 2020. Let us know before the meeting, and the committee will do our best to get some into your hands. See everyone on the 19th!

MARCH QUIZ

By Jim Godlove

Q: On April 20, 1861, the USS *Merrimack* was burned and sank at which location?





2004 Fall Field Trip

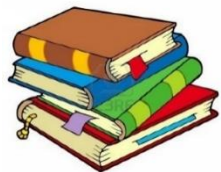
republished by the National Historical Society of Harrisburg, PA. Next we have **THE BLOCKADE – Runners and Raiders** published by the editors of Time-Life Books. Our fourth book is **IRONCLAD CAPTAIN – Seth Ledyard Phelps and the U.S. Navy, 1841-1864** by Jay Slagle and is from the Jefferson Davis Association, Rice University c/o Lynda Crist. And last, but not least is **HELD IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM BY ALL – The Civil War Letters of William B. Chilvers, 95th Illinois Infantry** edited by Thomas A. Pressly, III and Gary D. Joiner. This volume is a donation by Barry Brueggeman.

That’s it for our March raffle. I look forward to seeing all at the HESS Club once again.



BOOK RAFFLE
By Donnie Stowe

In view of our speaker’s topic this month, I’ve tried to weight our selections toward naval/Ironclad volumes. The first is **THE CIVIL WAR AT SEA - Volume 2: The River War** by Virgil Carrington Jones. This book is an ex-library volume in good condition and is a donation from James Godlove. Our second selection is not related to the Navy but is also from Jim’s collection –



REGULATIONS FOR THE ARMY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES 1863 and was

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

March 2, 1861 – After forcing the resignation of Governor Sam Houston, Texas formally joins the Confederacy

March 4, 1861 – Abraham Lincoln becomes the 16th President of the United States

March 4, 1865 – Abraham Lincoln inaugurated for second term as President

March 9, 1862 – USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia* battle at Hampton Roads, Virginia

March 12, 1864 – Red River Expedition begins in Louisiana

March 17, 1863 – Engagement at Kelly’s Ford, Virginia

March 19, 1865 – Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina

March 28, 1862 – Battle of Glorieta Pass, New Mexico Territory





HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Houston Civil War Round Table is dedicated to the study of the civilian, military, and cultural aspects of United States history during the period of 1861 – 1865 and to the preservation of historical sites and artifacts. For additional copies of this form please go to www.HoustonCivilWar.com

Membership Type

(CHECK ONE BOX ONLY.)

- \$50 – Individual
 \$60 – Family
 \$25 – Student/Faculty or Out-of-Town
 Existing Member - Address / Information Update Only

JOINING BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND MAY 31

NON-RENEWING members joining in the months of January through May will automatically be enrolled as members for the current and following year's speaker series ("campaign").

Name: _____
(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

Address: _____

City: _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell Home Work

Email Address: _____

In which format would you like to receive your newsletter?

- Email (PDF) U.S. Postal Service (Printed)

How did you learn about us? _____

FOR FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ONLY

Family Member Name: _____
(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Home Work

Email Address: _____

Note: For memberships or subscriptions outside the U.S., extra cost of postage to mail the newsletter may be added. Cost will vary; please write or email to inquire.

Mail your completed application and dues to: Houston Civil War Round Table
C/O Barry G. Brueggeman
3706 Lonniewood Drive
Houston, TX 77059

2019 - 2020 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN – THE HESS CLUB

Mar. 19, 2020 Stephen Kinnaman: *“Merrimack: Biography of a Steam Frigate”*
Apr. 16, 2020 Lorien Foote: *“The Dogs of War”*
May 21, 2020 Brian Steel Wills, 2020 Vandiver Award Recipient: *“Inglorious Passages: Noncombat Deaths in the American Civil War”*

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