



The Great Lakes Civil War Forum

Where the Fight Was the Thickest: The Campaigns of the Iron Brigade of the West

Saturday, October 15

Check In Opens at 8:30am * Program Begins at 9:30am

\$55 (\$70 for non-members) includes lunch

A Deadly Game of Bo-Peep: The Iron Brigade at South Mountain, September 14, 1862

Presenter: Dr. Brian Matthew Jordan

On Sunday, September 14, 1862, the Army of the Potomac notched three, hard-earned victories in the rugged passes of South Mountain. One of the most inspiring moments of this first major combat of the Antietam Campaign involved a brigade of hearty Midwesterners who, ascending the old National Pike, forced Turner's Gap. How did this daring action contribute to and shape the identity of what came to be called the Iron Brigade? And how did the battle itself shape the course of the Maryland Campaign? Historian Brian Matthew Jordan will address these questions and more.

Whoever Stood in front of the Corn Field at Antietam Needs no Praise: The Black Hat Brigade at Antietam

Presenter: Scott D. Hartwig

The Battle of Antietam was not the costliest battle the western brigade of General John Gibbon fought in the war, but for those who experienced its ferocity it was an unforgettable experience that no one who survived it ever wanted to repeat. Nearly a year later, Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wisconsin, would write that he dreaded the very thought of the Antietam. This program will examine the experience of the brigade that day, what sustained them through some of the fiercest fighting of the war, how some failed, but ultimately how they emerged from the Maryland Campaign with the nickname The Iron Brigade.

Boys, We Must Hold Our Colors on This Line or Lie Here Under Them

Presenter: Phil Spaugy

The 19th Indiana is probably the least known of the Iron Brigade regiments. The veterans of the 19th had no authors such as Mickey Sullivan, Rufus Dawes, Jerome Watrous, or George Otis to write their regimental history. But the other men who wore the Black Hats remembered them well. Jerome Watrous of the 6th Wisconsin Volunteers recalled, "The 19th Indiana regiment became known as "Old Posey County" or "Swamp Hogs No. 19" and "every man of them did not care a goll darn how he was dressed, but was all hell for a fight."

The 19th Indiana brought 339 men to Gettysburg and by the end of July 1 had lost 27 killed, 133 wounded and 50 missing. Phil Spaugy's program will detail their vicious fighting along Willoughby Run and during the retreat to Seminary Ridge, where the 19th Indiana served on the exposed left flank of the brigade.

Camp-Fire Memories of the Iron Brigade

Presenter: Lance Herdegen

The four years of Civil War cast a long shadow over the surviving veterans of the Iron Brigade. At first, they were too busy getting on with their lives and did not give much thought of their days in uniform. But the years passed and soon they were caught up in an overwhelming need to think of soldier days, seek out the old comrades, and reflect on what had been accomplished. They called their reunions "Camp-Fires" and the written accounts comprised much of what is known today of the Iron Brigade. Writers and researchers delight in finding those accounts, but often use only small segments after making decisions on their historical value. The accounts themselves were often softened to spare readers, yet they hint at the truth of the war experience and provide an important glimpse of how the war and its memory affected the veterans and their families.