

MAY 16, 2017

## **Ed Bonekemper...*The Myth of the Lost Cause: False Remembrance of the Civil War***

**Ed Bonekemper** earned a B.A., cum laude, in American history from Muhlenberg College, an M.A. in American history from Old Dominion University, and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

He is the author of six Civil War books:

*The Myth of the Lost Cause: Why the South Fought the Civil War and Why the North Won*

*Lincoln and Grant: The Westerners Who Won the Civil War*

*Grant and Lee: Victorious American and Vanquished Virginian*

*McClellan and Failure: A Study of Civil War Fear, Incompetence and Worse*

*A Victor, Not a Butcher: Ulysses S. Grant's Overlooked Military Genius*

*How Robert E. Lee Lost the Civil War.*

Ed is the Book Review Editor of *Civil War News* and was an adjunct lecturer in military history at Muhlenberg College from 2003 to 2010. He served as a Federal Government attorney for 34 years and is a retired Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

### TALK SUMMARY

The Southern-created Myth of the Lost Cause has long dominated Americans' remembrance of the Civil War, the country's watershed event. In many ways, that Myth has been America's most successful propaganda campaign.

Historian **Ed Bonekemper** examines the accuracy of the Myth and how it has affected our perception of slavery, states' rights, the nature of the Civil War, and the military performance of Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant and James Longstreet. He begins by discussing the nature of slavery in 1860, including whether it was a benign and dying institution.

The heart of his analysis is whether slavery was the primary cause of secession and the Confederacy's creation. He does this by examining Federal protection of slavery, slavery demographics, seceding states' conventions and declarations, their outreach to other slave states, Confederate leaders' statements, and the Confederacy's foreign policy, POW policy and rejection of black soldiers.

Drawing on decades of research, Bonekemper then discusses other controversial Myth issues, such as whether the South could have won the Civil War, whether Lee was a great general, whether Grant was a mere "butcher" who won by brute force, whether Longstreet lost Gettysburg for Lee, and whether the North won by waging "total war."

