

PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

more than a library...it's an experience

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TRIED BY WAR: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF AT THE PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

CHICAGO, IL – On one side of the Civil War stood Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy: a graduate of West Point, seasoned by command in the Mexican War and four years as Secretary of War. The man who led the Union, however, had dramatically different experience:

"I bent a musket pretty badly on one occasion," Abraham Lincoln said about his service in the Black Hawk War. "If [he] saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes."

On Thursday, March 13th, renowned Civil War historian James McPherson will present *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief*, a lecture based on his forthcoming book, at the Pritzker Military Library. This program is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. The presentation and live webcast will begin at 6:00 p.m., preceded by a reception for Library members at 5:00 p.m. It will also be recorded for television broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20.

How did a man with no formal training become what one historian called "a better strategist than any of his generals"? Much as Lincoln had done to earn his law degree, he immersed himself in books on strategy and learned rapidly. He listened carefully to his top generals, and his correspondence reveals a keen awareness of their personalities and capabilities – particularly, McPherson argues, his loyalty to the controversial Ulysses S. Grant. But the final decision on all questions of strategy rested with Lincoln, and his terms for ending the war were unconditional:

"[Jefferson Davis] cannot voluntarily reaccept the Union; we cannot voluntarily yield it," Lincoln said in 1864. "It is an issue which can only be tried by war and decided by victory."

James McPherson is the recipient of the 2007 Pritzker Military Library Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement in Military Writing. He is the author of fifteen books and the editor of another dozen, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, and *For Cause and Comrades*, winner of the Lincoln Prize in 1989. He is the George Henry Davis '86 Professor of American History Emeritus at Princeton University, and a member of the advisory boards of the National Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar and the Gettysburg Foundation.

Seating for this event is limited, so reservations are recommended. Call 312.587.0234 or email events@pritzkermilitarylibrary.net.

For more information, please visit pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/events.

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About the Pritzker Military Library

The Pritzker Military Library is a private, non-partisan research library located at 610 North Fairbanks Court in the Streeterville neighborhood of Chicago, near the Magnificent Mile. The mission of the Pritzker Military Library is to acquire and maintain an accessible collection of materials and develop appropriate programs focusing on the Citizen Soldier in the preservation of democracy.

The 5,000 sq. ft. facility features over 26,000 historical, reference, biographical and rare books on military subjects, over 800 original antique military posters and prints, and other military artifacts from private donors and the collection of COL (IL) James N. Pritzker, ARNG (Ret.). Since opening in October 2003, the Library has produced over 180 programs including author events, one-on-one interviews with Medal of Honor recipients, and Chicago's only monthly public affairs program on military issues, *Front & Center with John Callaway*. Evening programs in the Library's McHenry Atrium are presented free of charge in front of a live audience, broadcast live on the Internet, and taped for broadcast on WYCC-TV/Channel 20, a PBS affiliate. Programs are also available as audio podcasts on the Library website and at iTunes. A complimentary reception for Associate Members with wine and light refreshments precedes each evening program. Books are provided for purchase and signing at author events by The Book Stall at Chestnut Court.

To learn more, please visit pritzkermilitarylibrary.org.

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