

Welcome back to the MRRT's 48<sup>th</sup> year! It promises to be a great one. Thanks to the diligent work of our President/Program Chairman, Jim Burroughs, our speakers' list for the year 2008 is complete and chocked full of exciting programs. Another Fall Field Trip will be conducted in October (the site to be determined soon). Our membership numbers remain at a record high—so we have much to look forward to and be thankful for.

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On a sad note we announce the retirement of the incomparable Dr. Weldon Petz. For more than a decade Weldon has entertained and educated the Michigan Regimental on a wide variety of subjects. In an illustrious speaking career of 60 years—October of 1947 to November 3, 2007—Weldon delighted some 4840 audiences with his wisdom, knowledge, and style. We certainly wish Weldon all the best and hope that he will show up at an occasional meeting to make certain we are doing things right. The MRRT can feel privileged to have heard Weldon's many presentations, and we are honored to call him our own.

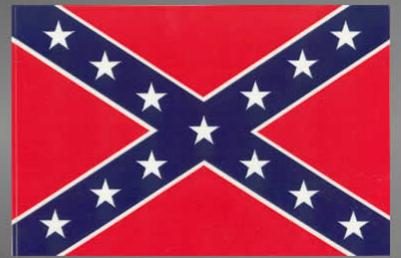
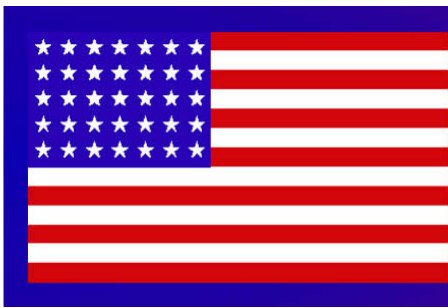
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On August 20, 1864, a correspondent of the **Cincinnati Commercial**, witnessing a heroic attack led by a Michigan cavalryman, reported from Georgia:

*Placing himself at the head of his brigade, the gallant and fearless Minty drew his sabre, and his voice rang out clear and loud: 'Attention, column! Forward, trot; Regulate by the center regiment; March, gallop, March!' And away the brigade went with a yell that echoed away across the valleys....Charging for their lives, and yelling like devils, Minty and his troopers encountered the rebels behind a hastily-constructed barricade of rails. Pressing their rowels deep into their horses' flanks, and raising their sabers aloft, on, on, on, nearer and nearer to the rebels they plunged. The terror-stricken enemy could not withstand the thunderous wave of men and horses that threatened to engulf them. They broke and ran just as Minty and his troopers were urging their horses for the decisive blow....Many of the rebels defended themselves with almost superhuman strength, yet it was all in vain. The charge of the Federal steel was irresistible. The heads and limbs of some of the rebels were actually severed from their bodies, the head of the rider falling on one side of the horse, the lifeless trunk upon the other....The praises of Minty and his command are upon every tongue!"*

The Minty referred to was neither a common soldier nor an ordinary man. Born in Ireland in 1831, Robert Horatio George Minty served as an ensign in the British Army while seeing service in the West Indies, Central America, and Africa before resigning in 1853 and settling in Michigan. When the Civil War broke out, Minty would ultimately be an officer in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Michigan Cavalry regiments. It was in the latter unit that Minty flourished which led to his appointment over several regiments as a Brigade Commander in the Western Theater. His confidence in, and effective use of, the saber received for his men the distinction of being designated as "*The Saber Brigade of the Army of the Cumberland.*" He would later earn the brevet ranks of Brigadier and Major General. Minty's beloved 4th Michigan earned its spurs in eastern Tennessee in 1863-1864, and was credited with fighting in 97 battles and skirmishes "*in which blood flowed*" including Stones River, Shelbyville, Chickamauga, Atlanta, and Selma with its greatest distinction perhaps in capturing Jefferson Davis at the war's end. Possibly even more intriguing is the postwar career of this Irish rogue.

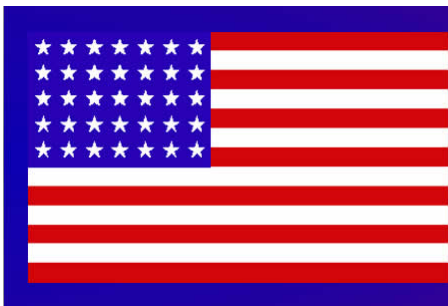
On **MONDAY, JANUARY 28**, the Michigan Regimental welcomes guest speaker, Rand Bitter, whose talk will be based from his acclaimed book, "Minty and His Cavalry: A History of the Saber Brigade and its Commander." Although little is mentioned of Minty's exploits and heroics in most Civil War sources, Rand accumulated a startling amount of information which was first published and released on August 24, 2006 (the 100th anniversary of Minty's



death.) Rand will bring along a few copies of his book to sell at the meeting. His presentation has been highly recommended by various other Round Tables in Michigan, and it's one that you won't want to miss.

**QUIZ: All questions pertain to Confederate generals, in the format: “What did you do after the War?”**

1. Graduating fifth in his West Point class, he gallantly served in the Mexican War. His Civil War career, however, was often disastrous. After the war he became a civil engineer in Alabama and Texas. And, how did he die in Galveston, Texas on September 27, 1876?
2. Near the outbreak of the war, he was an assistant instructor of tactics at West Point. During the war he served under the command of Jeb Stuart. After the war he was elected governor of Virginia, unsuccessfully ran for the U.S. Senate, and was appointed consul-general at Havana by President Grover Cleveland. He served during the Spanish-American War and retired with the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Army. And, who were his two famous, high-ranking Confederate uncles?
3. A nephew by marriage of Zachary Taylor, this Georgian graduated in the celebrated West Point class of 1842. His record with the Army of Northern Virginia was steady if not spectacular. After the war he engaged in the insurance business in Augusta and served as the collector of internal revenue and post master at Savannah. And, which campaign caused James Longstreet to relieve him from command?
4. Before the war he killed a newspaper editor in a duel. During the war he lost his right eye at Shiloh. After the war he went to England and later practiced law in New Orleans until his death in 1872. And, name his brother, also a Confederate general, who was killed by a newspaper editor in 1888.
5. Before the war he was dismissed from VMI and then graduated from the University of Virginia. During the war he served under Stonewall Jackson and was severely wounded at Spotsylvania. After the war he plowed his own fields with mules, resumed his law practice and served as lieutenant governor for 5 years. Switching to the Republican Party, he was twice elected to Congress. And, which professor at VMI had him expelled, nearly leading to a duel?
6. A hero at First Bull Run, he also participated in the Vicksburg Campaign, and later in North Carolina. Tried and acquitted for intoxication, he was again tried and acquitted for disobedience of orders. After the war he became a high school principal in Midway, Alabama where he died in 1868. And, what was his nickname, supposedly because of his skinny legs?
7. As a brother-in-law to John Hunt Morgan, this cavalryman also wrote 2 Civil War books after the war. He was also a commissioner of Shiloh National Military Park from 1895 until his death in 1916. And, through marriage, to which other Confederate general was he related?
8. This Kentucky-born West Point graduate had one of the most spectacular advances in rank of any officer in the Confederacy. After the war he married Anna Marie Hennen and lived in New Orleans engaging in the insurance business and cotton broking. He died of yellow fever on August 30, 1879. And, name the title of his memoirs.
9. This Kentuckian served as a general in Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry. After the war he raised several celebrated race horses. Severe financial reverses, culminating in the loss of his home, caused him to commit suicide in 1884. And, which famous Federal cavalry general, who died of typhoid in December of 1863, was his cousin with the same surname?
10. After he surrendered Fort Donelson in 1862, he would climb to the rank of lieutenant general. After the war he was editor of the Louisville *Courier*, elected governor of Kentucky in 1887, and in 1896 was the vice presidential nominee of the “Gold Democrats.” He died at age 91 in 1914. And, at which battle in World War II was his son, a junior and a lieutenant general, killed?



The Michigan Regimental extends its condolences to the family of Don Rupp whose wife, **Penny**, passed away in December.

Although the wintry weather caused our numbers to be somewhat down, the enthusiasm of our audience and speakers could not be dampened for November’s “**Show and Tell**” meeting. The evening began with 6-year-old **Brandon Wright** discussing a Kentucky Long Rifle. **Chuck Ducharme** showed a Civil War musket and a photograph and told the story of John Snyder Cooper. **Hudson Mead** followed with a French musket flintlock and a painting of the 92nd New York (Alexander W. Blain). **Howard Fundukian** displayed a painting of Elmer Ellsworth, the first officer to die in the Civil War. **Jerry Maxwell** brought in a miniature, “one-of-a-kind” presentation baseball bat belonging to Captain Edward P. Bangs of the 2nd Massachusetts and a pair of spurs with an unusual labeling inside. Closing out the evening, **Tom Singelyn** showed a sword and collection belonging to Union cavalry general, Wesley Merritt. Our thanks to all of the presenters for a fun evening.

**ODDS & ENDS:**

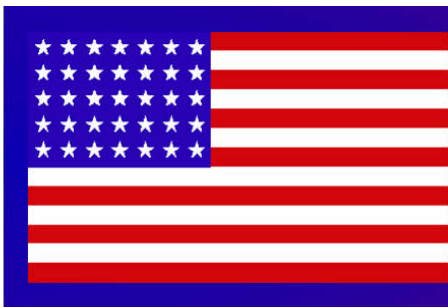
- **Yearly Dues:** It’s that time again, except the dues have been raised, as of a unanimous vote in September, to \$20 for ALL MEMBERS. Envelopes were provided for your convenience in the last newsletter. If you haven’t sent in your dues for 2008, now is the time. If you lost your envelope, simply address another to Carroll Tietz (make the check out to Carroll as well). 10640 Gamewood Dr. South Lyon 48178.
- On Saturday, January 12, Al Oakes again held his Annual History and Military Memorabilia Show at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Berkley. Numerous dealers and displays were on hand for shopping, trading, and perusing.

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As was his custom, Jefferson Davis was seated in his pew in St. Paul’s Church in Richmond on Sunday morning, April 2, 1865. Midway through the service a messenger arrived with an ominous note from Robert E. Lee—the Confederate capital city would soon be in the hands of the Federals. Davis and his cabinet spent the remainder of that Sunday feverishly preparing an escape. By 8:00 P.M. the President left the city. Making his way southward he would join his wife, Varina, and their four children in Charlotte, North Carolina before continuing their escape.

Meanwhile, a massive Federal manhunt had begun pursuing the Davis entourage. A \$100,000 reward had been offered by the Federal government. Among these cavalry units was the 4th Michigan, now under the command of 30-year-old Lt. Col. Benjamin Dudley Pritchard. An Ohioan by birth, Pritchard had graduated from the University of Michigan law school in 1860 and began practicing in Allegan. The 4th Michigan trailed the Davis party through the middle of Georgia to a small community called Irwinville. Other Federal cavalry units, including the 1st Wisconsin, were also in the area. In the early morning hours of Wednesday, May 10, a local black man told Pritchard some details as to where he might find the fleeing Davis. About half a mile from where he expected to find Davis’ camp, Pritchard called a halt. Second Lieutenant Alfred B. Purinton of Company I, and a native of Coldwater, was told to take 25 dismounted men to circle around the north side of the camp to block a possible escape. Pritchard now decided to wait until dawn for the attack.

At about 4:00 A.M. Pritchard ordered his men into action. Easily the Davis party was captured, but in the shadows Purinton’s men had become tangled with those of the 1st Wisconsin. A smattering of shots were fired in the confusion, and before order could be restored, two Michigan troopers had been killed, and one Michigander and three Badgers had been severely wounded. While Pritchard attempted to calm the situation, Lieutenant Julian G. Dickinson, adjutant of the 4th Michigan, decided to take inventory of what and who had been captured. Suddenly Trooper Andrew Bee of Company



I called Dickinson's attention to three persons, their arms linked, walking rapidly across a clearing, away from the tents and toward the thicket. "*Adjutant,*" Bee shouted in his thick Norwegian accent, "*there goes a man dressed in women's clothes!*"

Dickinson rode toward the group and ordered them to halt. When his command was ignored, Dickinson sent four of his Michigan men to intercept and surround the fugitives. The adjutant then investigated and identified the three as Mrs. Davis, her black maid, and President Davis. Dickinson later wrote: "*Davis had on for disguise a black shawl drawn closely around his head and shoulders, through the folds of which I could see his gray hair. He wore on his person a woman's long black dress, which completely concealed his figure, excepting his spurred boot heels. The dress was undoubtedly Mrs. Davis' traveling dress which she afterwards wore on her return march to Macon. At the time of the capture, she was attired in her morning gown, and a black shawl covered her head and stately form.*" [The so-called disguise worn by Davis has long been a controversial subject. The fact that he did wear a woman's garment has been established, and was the subject of much adverse publicity in the North. Mrs. Davis testified that when her husband started to leave their tent, he picked up a waterproof cloak which he thought was his own. In the dark, however, he took that of Mrs. Davis, which was quite similar to his own. Mrs. Davis threw her shawl over her husband's head. Besides the raincoat and shawl, Jefferson Davis was wearing a Confederate uniform and cavalry boots when captured.]

In another part of the camp, one of the troopers found Davis' horse, saddled and bridled with holsters and a valise, all of which he quickly appropriated. Taking the animal before President Davis, the man remarked: "*You won't need this horse any more. Hadn't you better give him to me?*" One of the Confederate officers spoke up angrily, "*How dare you insult the President in this manner?*" he demanded. "*President, hell,*" growled the trooper, "*What's he president of?*"

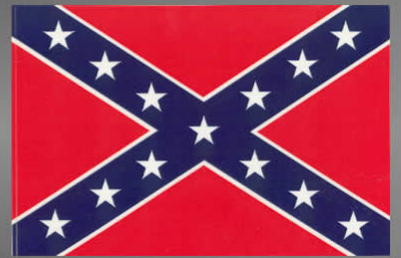
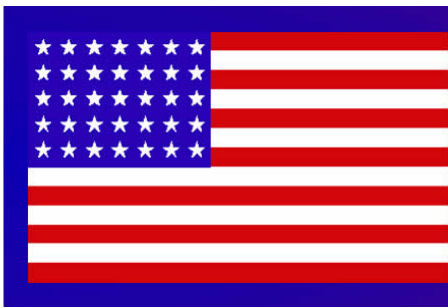
Pritchard proceeded to count heads and find out exactly what had been caught in his net. Besides President and Mrs. Davis and their four children, there were Mrs. Davis' brother and sister, Midshipman J.D. Howell of the Confederate navy, and Miss Maggie Howell. Captives also included Postmaster General John H. Reagan, Colonel Burton Harrison, Davis' private secretary, and nearly thirty others, plus about 15 horses, 25-30 mules, 3 ambulances, and several wagons containing personal baggage. The prisoners were soon transferred to Washington D.C.

Payment of the reward money was held up until 1868, when an appropriation was made by Congress. The \$100,000 was divided up: General James Harrison Wilson, in command of the entire cavalry corps, Lt. Col. Pritchard, Lt. Col. Henry Harnden of the 1st Wisconsin, and a Captain Joseph A. Yoeman of the 1st Ohio Cavalry—\$3,000 each. The balance was distributed in equal shares to members of the various units which participated in the chase and capture.

For his part in Davis' capture, Benjamin Pritchard won the rank of brevet brigadier general. After the war Pritchard returned to Allegan, where he engaged in several enterprises, including his law practice until 1868. After that he devoted most of his attention to farming, real estate, and banking. He organized the First National Bank of Allegan in 1872 and served as its president more than thirty years. During a war leave, he married Mary B. Kent of Ohio. They had two children. In 1878 Pritchard was elected treasurer of the State of Michigan on the Republican ticket and eventually won a second term. He died in Allegan on November 26, 1907, at age 72. Julian G. Dickinson, a native New Yorker who had settled in Jackson, Michigan, was brevetted captain for his work in the Davis capture. After the war Dickinson attended the University of Michigan law school and practiced in Detroit, with offices in the Newberry Building, and attained a prominent place in the social and business life of the city. He died in 1916.

## QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Braxton Bragg and a heart attack while walking down the street
2. Fitzhugh Lee and Robert E. Lee/Samuel Cooper



3. Lafayette McLaws and Knoxville Campaign
4. Dan Adams and William Wirt Adams
5. James Walker and Thomas Stonewall Jackson
6. Nathan Evans and "Shanks"
7. Basil Duke and A.P. Hill married Mrs. Duke's sister
8. John Bell Hood and *Advance and Retreat*
9. Abraham Buford and John Buford
10. Simon Bolivar Buckner and Okinawa

A brief reminder of our meeting this month—**MONDAY, JANUARY 28**. Our speaker, **Rand Bitter**, will discuss the relatively unknown tale of "Robert *H.G. Minty: A History of the Saber Brigade and its Commander.*" We'll start at 6:30 P.M. at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). This sounds like a great evening.....

Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.