



## MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 59<sup>th</sup> year in 2019 – and this month is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!). Membership is \$25 a year (\$5 increase to support preservation) – or \$5 for students. Checks should be made out to Treasurer **Jeanie Graham** (the bank does not like checks made out to the RoundTable) and can be mailed to her home at **29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2326**; or simply bought to the meeting and given to Jeanie. Cash is always welcomed.

**Our next meeting will be Monday, March 25, 2019.** We meet in the basement of the Farmington Library (corner of Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road) at 6:30 pm. **Our speaker will be David Walker of Van Wert, Ohio who will portray with us “The Life and Times of President Jefferson Davis!”**

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

We will be electing new officers in March! Mollie is retiring as Secretary after many years of service and George will be retiring as coffee sergeant. All of our positions, including President, will be up for a vote. Your participation with the Roundtable will be greatly appreciated.

Our March meeting will include the FINAL vote for our 2019 trip destination. Proposed destinations include:

- . Gettysburg – last visited in 2007
  - . The Lincoln Assassination – including the John Wilkes Booth Escape Trail – new trip destination
  - . Richmond, Virginia – including the 1862 Seven Days Campaign – last visited in 2001
  - . Savannah, Georgia – new trip destination
  - . The Shenandoah Valley Campaigns – 1862 or 1864. 1864 Campaign – visited in 2003, 1862 Campaign – 1990’s
- Five great destinations! If you are planning on going on the trip but will not be at our March meeting, you may send your vote to Mollie at [mmgalate@gmail.com](mailto:mmgalate@gmail.com)



**Tonight we are giving the Confederacy equal time as David Walker of Van Wert, Ohio will portray President Jefferson Davis and share with us the “Life and Times of Jefferson Davis”!** Once David is introduced he will become Jefferson Davis, discussing his life from birth in Kentucky to his retirement at Beauvoir in Biloxi, Mississippi.

**David has been impersonating President Davis for over 12 years**, appearing at Civil War Roundtables, Reenactments, Balls, Fashion Shows, and Schools. President Lincoln (our friend Fred Priebe) encouraged David to impersonate Jefferson Davis. He started reenacting as a soldier in 1987. David has performed in most of the Midwestern states, Virginia, and New Mexico. **For the last nine years he has been the official Jefferson Davis at several National Civil War Reenactments.**

David retired from teaching elementary school, primarily fifth grade, in Van Wert, Ohio in 2014 after 30 years of teaching. He continues to substitute teach. David has loved American History since he read his first Abraham Lincoln book in the third grade.

The Roundtable would like to thank Tom Nanzig for his entertaining and educational program, “Ten True Tales . . . with a Twist”. The audience participation was terrific. Good news, Tom will share Part 2 with us in March 2020. A brief summary of Tom’s off-the-beaten path topics follows.



**New Light on the Bixby Letter** the Bixby letter was a letter sent by President Lincoln to Lydia Bixby, offering condolences on the loss of five sons in the Union Army. The letter has been praised as one of President Lincoln's finest written works and has been reproduced over the years. Unfortunately, the story was not true as two sons were killed in battle, one disappeared, one received an honorable discharge, and one deserted from the Union Army. President Lincoln's Secretary, John Hay, wrote the letter. Lydia may have run a house of ill-fame in Boston and had Confederate sympathies.



**Trail and tale of Stonewall Jackson's arm** the likelihood that Stonewall's arm was actually dug up is very low, resulting in the high probability that his arm is really at the Ellwood Home. There is no record left of how the arm was originally buried. The plaque honoring Stonewall was set up in 1921 by the U.S. Marines.

**Hemp Bales** Confederate General Sterling Price led 15,000 men against only 3,000 Union soldiers in the Battle of Lexington, Missouri on September 18-20, 1861, one of the first battles of the war. The Confederates soaked very heavy hemp bales to use as moving fortifications. The hemp was fire-proof and impervious to cannon and small arms fire. The

bales were rolled forward as moving breastworks to surround the Union position. The Union Army soon surrendered.

**Union General Charles Stone** The battle of Ball's Bluff – October 21, 1861. The Confederate Army outnumbered the limited number of Union soldiers that were able to cross the Potomac River. During the ensuing battle Edward Baker, a Senator and a good friend of President Lincoln, was killed. Afterwards, General Stone spent six months in prison without any charges. Creating more trouble for himself, General Stone also let slave-owners come into his camp and recapture slaves, which was the law at that time. During the 1880's, General Stone supervised the work on the Statue of Liberty.

**Richard Snowden Andrews** Confederate artilleryman Richard Andrews was disemboweled during the Battle of Cedar Mountain on August 9, 1862. He survived and was back in the Confederate army eight months later. A silver plate was installed over his wound. He survived another wound and lived until the age of 73. Richard was an active architect.

**General Mosby and the Masons** When Union General George Custer executed 6-7 Confederates in Front Royal, Virginia, General Mosby, and "The Grey Ghost" wanted revenge. From a group of Union prisoners seven soldiers were selected to be executed, of which only three were actually executed. One of the Union prisoners gave General Mosby the Masonic sign of distress. The General then substituted another prisoner for the fellow Mason. Two of the seven soldiers were shot, and survived, and the other two escaped execution.

**Civil War Battlefield Medicine** Major Jonathan Letterman, chief medical officer of the Army of the Potomac, instituted reforms that are still with us today. Before the Major's reforms, sometimes men would lay on the battlefield as long as seven days before being picked up. First-aid stations were set up at the brigade and divisional level, resulting in an increase from one in September 1862 to 273 in July 1863. From the first aid stations casualties were then sent back to the division. Ambulance drivers were given the responsibility to drive the casualties back to aid stations and hospitals. Today, every hospital works on Letterman's ideas.

**Colonel Pleasants and his Theodolite** Colonel Harry Pleasants, a Pennsylvania miner, led the effort to dig a mine to blow up the Confederate entrenchments. A major part of digging the mine was to determine exactly where they were under the Confederate works. A theodolite was used to make five successful readings under the Confederate line without being shot.

**Medals of Honor** Dr. Bernard Irwin's actions on February 13, 1861, were the first to be recognized with the Medal of Honor. This incident was actually against the Apaches, not the Confederates. He was awarded the Medal in 1894. Corporal Francis Branell, assistant to Elmer Ellsworth, was Ellsworth's avenger. He killed James Jackson, the Marshall House innkeeper, shortly after Jackson had killed Ellsworth. Corporal Branell was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1877.



Jacob Parrott, one of the Andrews' Raiders, was the first winner of the Medal of Honor in March 1863 after the Medal was officially recognized. He survived capture as he was returned to the Union Army in a prisoner exchange.

**The Silent Witness** The doll owned by the seven year old daughter of Wilber McLean witnessed General Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The doll was returned to the Appomattox Court House Park in 1993!

**Minutes for February 25, 2019 Meeting Call to Order** 6:40 pm, about 30 present for business meeting **Pledge** dedicated to the four Special Forces members lost in Syria **Introduction of Guests and New Members** guest Tony Wang who found us on an internet search. We were happy to visit with Mae and Mike Wright, Don Kadar and Gary Pike! **Treasurer's Report** 21 members have paid their dues so far. We will be reimbursed \$60 for the cancelled January meeting **Secretary's Report** November 2018 accepted **Preservation** the National Park Service has added the Camp Nelson National Monument in Kentucky, which served as a Union supply depot and as a training site for African-American soldiers. A petition drive is attempting to add Fort Wayne in Detroit to the National Park system. **Newsletters** Bob read from the Cleveland Charger, the Indianapolis Hardtack, the Cincinnati Canister and the NYC Dispatch. **Program** President Lincoln has been rescheduled from the cancelled January meeting to July. **Items of Interest** no new items **New Business** We will elect officers at the March meeting. The Roundtable needs to incorporate as a non-profit to receive a Michigan state tax ID number **Old Business** None

**Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to Confederate President Jefferson Davis:**

1. What positions did Jefferson Davis hold with the U.S. government prior to the Civil War?
2. Why was Jefferson Davis elected President of the Confederacy?
3. Which books did Jefferson Davis write after the War was over?
4. Which Union regiment captured President Davis when he was fleeing from Richmond?
5. What happened to President Davis's family?

### Civil War Essentials - Naughty Boys of the Civil War

The military leaders in the Civil War came with different personalities, backgrounds, strengths and weaknesses. Many were respectable, some indulged in alcohol too freely, and several were considered prudish. **There were however also some really naughty boys among them – two whose misdeeds became known were:**



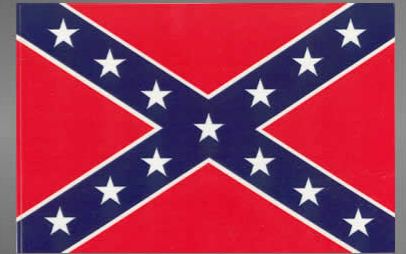
#### Judson Kilpatrick

**Kilpatrick was a Union cavalryman from New Jersey who saw combat from Big Bethel in 1861 to Sherman's march thru the Carolinas at the very end of the war.**

Kilpatrick, like his 1861 classmate, Custer, graduated from West Point to participate in the war. He experienced war in both the eastern and western theaters of war. He was personally brave and suffered several wounds but was also very ambitious, vain and often in trouble with his superiors. Moved to the cavalry after Big Bethel, his career and reputation as a leader were decidedly mixed. **He was considered a harsh commander who acquired the nickname "Kill Cavalry" because of his indifference to his men's lives and welfare.** In a war where "collateral damage" to civilian property was common, Kilpatrick seemed to inflict more and voiced no regret. **He performed well on several occasions, notably at Brandy Station and in the battles around Atlanta.** However his reputation was marred by his poor judgement in insisting that Gen. Farnsworth attack a strong rebel position on the third day at Gettysburg and the mismanaged raid on Richmond in March 1864 in which

Ulric Dahlgren and many of his men were lost. **Although Sherman once referred to him as "... a hell of a damn fool", he retained him as his cavalry leader for his Georgia/Carolinas campaign because of his audacity.**





A short man with prominent sideburns, **Kilpatrick fancied himself a ladies man** and was believed to have had dalliances with loose women several times during the war. **One widely related tale is that he was caught in bed with a young Southern woman when Wade Hampton's cavalry suddenly attacked his command at night at Monroe's Crossroads late in the war.** Kilpatrick was forced to flee to safety in his night clothes while his troops reformed and his bedmate had to hide in a ditch!

### Earl Van Dorn

**Mississippi-born Van Dorn attended West Point and fought with distinction in the Mexican American War and against hostile Indians.** Siding with his home state, he joined the Confederate Army and enjoyed success in the first year of the war. Given command of the Trans-Mississippi District in early 1862, he attempted a double pincer attack on the rear of the Union force at Pea Ridge, Arkansas which partially succeeded but left the rebel force separated from their ammunition train. Counterattacked by the Union force, he was forced to retreat. **Although Van Dorn refused to consider Pea Ridge a defeat, his failed assault on Union positions at Corinth, Mississippi in October 1862 could not be explained away.** This defeat caused the government to reassign him to a role in the cavalry. **He soon achieved his signature success in late 1862 at Holly Springs, Mississippi where his troops were able to destroy a huge amount of Union supplies. This foiled Grant's first Vicksburg campaign.** He had mixed success in the following months and in April, 1863 fought what would be his last battle at Franklin, Tennessee. He was criticized by Nathan B. Forrest for his management of this minor battle and challenged Forrest to a duel which was declined.



**At this time Van Dorn, who had been called "the terror of ugly husbands" by a reporter, apparently began an illicit relationship with a young married woman, Jesse Peters, whose older physician husband was often conveniently absent.** Rumors of this affair eventually reached Dr. Peters' ears and he publically threatened to shoot Van Dorn if he visited his wife again. After finding him with his wife one night, Peters was barely persuaded not to kill Van Dorn on the spot. However, **in May 1863 the good doctor followed through on his threat and fatally shot General Van Dorn at his desk.** Although arrested, Peters was never brought to trial. Conditioned by Victorian views on the sanctity of marriage, Southern public opinion condemned Van Dorn, not his killer. **So two naughty boys both had their comeuppance for their acts, but for one the outcome was fatal.**

### Quiz Answers:

1. Jefferson Davis served as the Colonel of a volunteer regiment during the Mexican War after graduating from West Point. He also represented Mississippi in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Jefferson served as Secretary of War from 1853-1857.
2. President Davis was a compromise candidate that appeased both the moderates and radicals. He really wanted a military command.
3. *The Rise and fall of the Confederate Government* – 2 volumes, published in 1881 and *A Short History of the Confederate States of America*, published in 1889. He spent two years in prison.
4. A detachment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry captured President Davis near Irwin, Georgia.
5. President Davis' first wife, Sarah, was the daughter of President Zachary Taylor, who did not approve of the marriage because Jefferson was in the military. Unfortunately, Sarah died three months after they were married of malaria. President Davis and his much younger second wife, Varina, had two daughters and four sons. Only the two daughters reached adulthood.