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Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

March 2023

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 63rd year in 2023 – and now is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!). Membership is \$25 a year – 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**. Cash or checks to pay for membership are always welcome at our meetings.

Our March 2023 meeting will be on Monday, March 27, 2023, at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library – corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. **Our speaker, Ken Baumann**, will probably begin his presentation shortly after 7:00 pm after completion of the 6:30 pm business meeting. **We must leave the library by 8:45 pm.**

The Roundtable's great website is 20 years old in 2023. Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

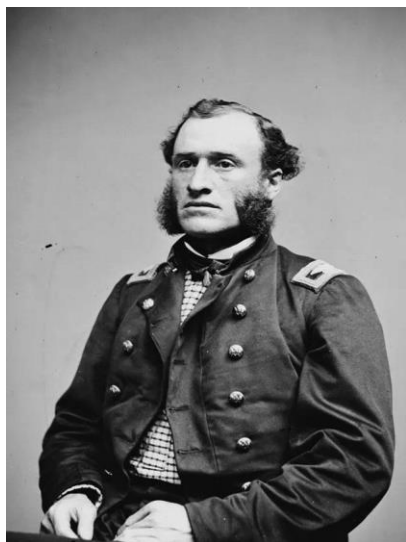
Update on Fall 2023 Roundtable Trip – Several destinations were proposed at the January and February meetings. Proposed trip locations included: the Nashville Area (Stones River, Franklin, Spring Hill); Forts Donelson and Henry, Vicksburg, and Mobile Bay. Eastern sites included Norfolk – Fort Monroe, and Eastern North Carolina, including Bentonville. If you have any other suggestions, please bring them to our attention. **A first vote to reduce the list will be held during our March meeting.**

The Roundtable is proud to welcome back as our speaker long-time member, Ken Baumann, who will speak on "The Heavy Battery" at Fort Donelson & Shiloh. Ken has been a member of the Roundtable for over 50 years and has spoken to our group on numerous topics. He is the author of *Arming the Suckers* (1988), a book which received favorable reviews. His area of Civil War expertise is Illinois in the War and Artillery. He has a horticultural degree from the University of Illinois. Ken was recently elected a "Fellow" of the Company of Military Historians". **This will be another interesting and educational presentation with Ken.**

February 2023 Speaker – Michael McCaffrey – Dearborn Heights Library Director – "Michigan's 24th Infantry".

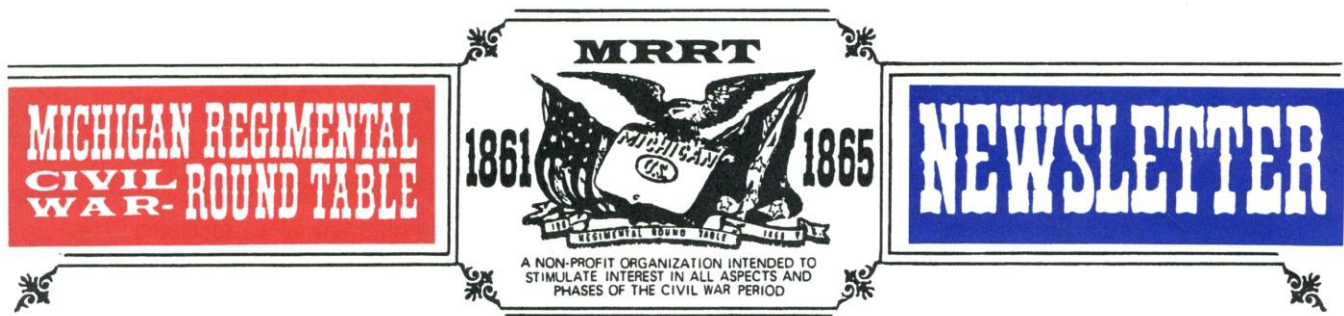
The presentation of "Michigan's 24th Infantry" by Michael McCaffrey was much appreciated by the MRRT.

Michael developed an interest in history when he was asked to take charge of some Dearborn Heights archives. His specific interest in the 24th arose in part when he discovered that three members of the unit were buried near a schoolhouse in Dearborn Heights.



When President Lincoln issued his June 1862 call for 300,000 additional troops, Michigan planned to form six new regiments. A mid-July meeting in Detroit which had been called to raise enthusiasm for the action somehow degenerated into a brawl. **This unseemly event prompted a court clerk, Henry Morrow (picture left), to undertake to raise a seventh regiment from the Detroit area.** His efforts were successful; 1030 men, of which about 1/3 were immigrants, were recruited and sworn in in August 1862. Interestingly, the US flag presented to the regiment was produced by Tiffany, famous for fine jewelry and other personal luxury goods.

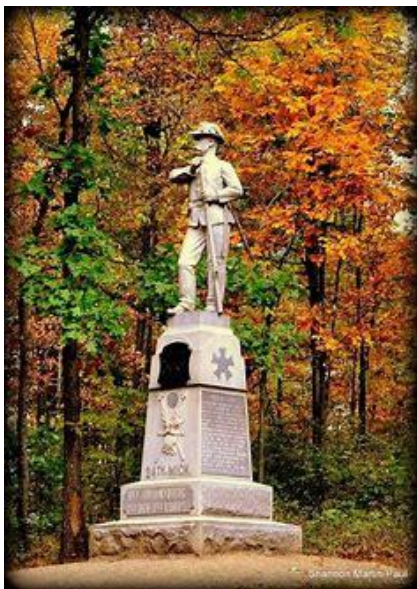
The unit was transported to Washington for training. In the meantime, several battles were fought including that at South Mountain. **General John Gibbon's brigade of three Wisconsin and one Indiana regiment performed so well there that it acquired the nickname the "Iron Brigade".** It was next in the thick of the fighting at the subsequent Antietam battle where it suffered further losses. **When the 24th**



finished its training, it was sent to join the depleted Iron Brigade. Their initial reception by the other brigade regiments was cool.

During the exhausting maneuvers following Lee’s army after Antietam, the 24th suffered its first war casualty – a 70-year-old man who had claimed to be 43 when he enlisted, died. **At Fredericksburg in December, the Iron Brigade fought under General Meade in the southern part of the battlefield.** Although it was spared the heavy losses inflicted on those units attacking Marye’s Heights, the 24th incurred its first battle losses there. Like the rest of the Army of the Potomac, the 24th had to endure the infamous “*mud march*” under General Burnside after Fredericksburg which led to significant sickness and even desertions among the regiment’s men. The winter of 1862-1863 was the Army of the Potomac’s “*Valley Forge*”.

At Chancellorsville in May 1863, the Iron Brigade was initially used as a lure by new army commander General Hooker to try to deceive the Confederates. This failed and General Robert E. Lee began his maneuvers which confused and dismayed Hooker and led to his greatest victory of the war. **It was after this battle that the Iron Brigade received its now-famous black slouch hats.** A soldier of the regiment who was convicted of desertion at this time was executed by firing squad.

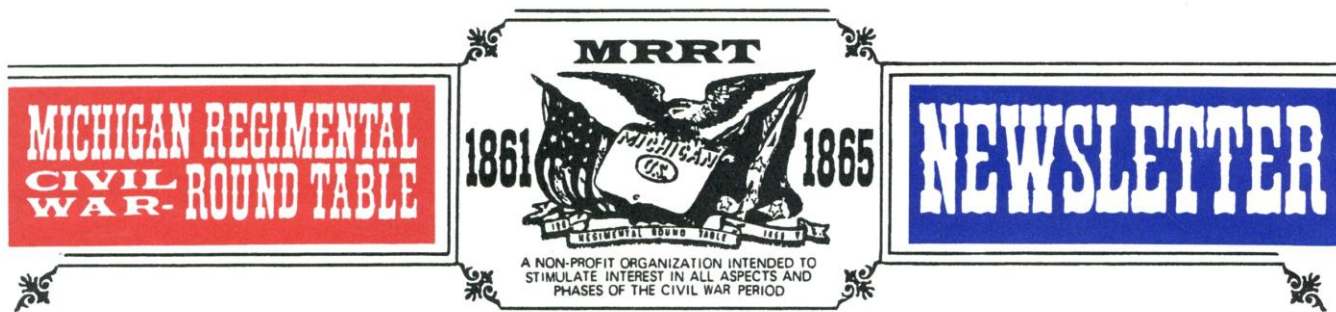


On the 1st day of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 1863, the 1st Corps, including the Iron Brigade, arrived to support General Buford’s cavalry division which was hard-pressed by units of General A.P. Hill’s Corps northwest of the town. Three of the brigade’s regiments attacked the rebels but also suffered heavy losses. **The 24th was able to approach the rebel infantry brigade of James Archer unseen and drove it back in disorder, capturing Archer and some of his men.** However, additional Confederate forces arrived before any more of the Army of the Potomac did and the Union soldiers were gradually forced back. The 24th retired slowly from six successive battle lines before it was compelled to retreat through the town toward Culp’s Hill. During this process, the 24th’s commander (now) Colonel Morrow, suffered a head wound and was captured by the Confederates but later managed to escape. **The 24th suffered almost 400 casualties out of the 496 men present before the fighting began** (monument at left) and the remainder of the Iron Brigade lost heavily as well. The Iron Brigade helped defend Culp’s Hill during the next two days of the bloodiest battle of the war.

During the spring of 1864, Union Commanding General Grant launched the Overland Campaign. **The 24th fought at the Wilderness and particularly at Spotsylvania Court House.** At the later battle, Albert Wallace of Dearborn, who is buried near the schoolhouse, was killed during an attack on the “*Muleshoe*” position.

The 24th endured most of the rest of the war in the East before being sent to Baltimore in February 1865. At war’s end it was stationed in Illinois and **served as the honor guard at President Lincoln’s funeral.** The regiment was mustered out of service in June 1865. Henry Morrow, who had organized and commanded the regiment, remained in the military until his death in 1891.

We thank Mike for his great presentation.



Quiz Questions: This month's questions pertain to the month of March during the Civil War.

1. March 1, 1865: Which Union state ratified the 13th Amendment to end slavery? Which Union state rejected the same amendment?
2. March 1, 1861: Name the U.S. Secretary of State who ordered a Brigadier General dismissed from the U.S. Army "for his treachery to the flag of his country" in surrendering military posts and Federal property in Texas. And, which aging general, a hero of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, and a future Confederate general, did he fire?
3. March 18, 1861: Who did President Lincoln appoint as Minister to Britain and Minister to France?
4. March 23, 1864: Which Major General became commander of the U.S. Army Fifth Corps? And, which general, nicknamed "Tardy George" did he supersede?
5. March 9, 1865: Which Federal general was almost captured in his bed at Monroe's Crossroads, South Carolina, by Generals Wade Hampton and Joe Wheeler? And, because he fled without his trousers, what nickname was given to this episode?

We thank "Old Sarge" for these questions and answers.

"Colonel Column – General Jeb Stuart's Ride During the Gettysburg Campaign"

Colonel, I have been reading up on the Gettysburg campaign. How could Jeb Stuart mess up so badly by riding off and leaving General Lee without any cavalry to help him at Gettysburg? Sore in the Saddle

I never fought against Gen. Stuart but from what I know **listening to my Michigan Cavalry Brigade comrades, there is a bit more to the Stuart situation than meets the eye.**

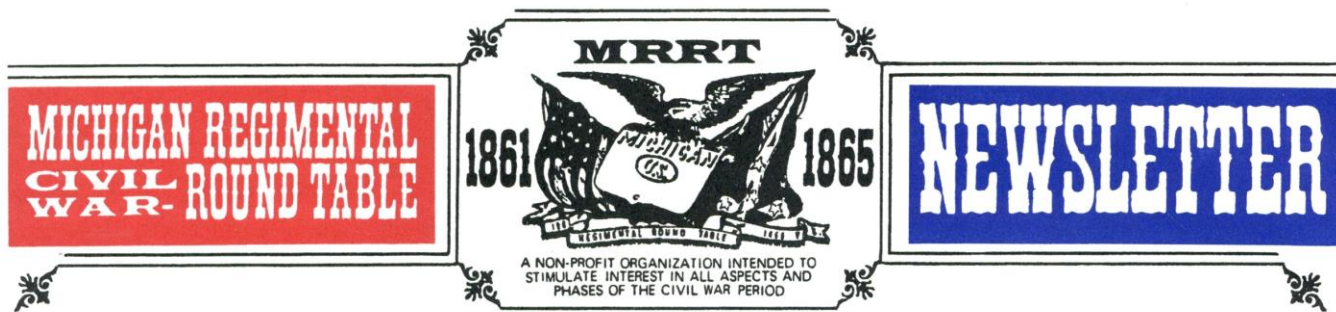
It seems that **when Gen. Lee plans to take his army into the north, he gave General Stuart permission to circle around the advance units of our Federal Army so that his best three brigades could read and disrupt our supply lines. Stuart left three cavalry brigades behind which were perfectly capable of all that General Lee asked.**



As Stuart's ride began, he ran into some situations it slowed him down: first he had trouble sneaking through our Federal line of march, then he stopped to capture 125 of our wagons near Washington City and then those captured wagons slowed down his cavalry column. His capture of valuable wagons, horses and supplies seem to him to be worth the effort, though.

When he moved across the Mason and Dixon line into Pennsylvania, Jeb expected to find Lee's army near Harrisburg. In fact, Ewell's Corps had already been there and had been farther east near York. Stuart was in no particular hurry because he knew that Lee still had three brigades of cavalry available to scout for him. And nobody, but nobody, in either army had figured to fight at Gettysburg. It was just one more flyspeck among dozens of villages on the map.

Stuart moved northeast to York then west to Carlisle, all the time just missing his planned meeting with Ewell's Corps, which had drawn back toward Gettysburg on Lee's orders. Ewell never left anyone behind to direct Stewart nor does it appear that Lee sent out any of his available cavalry to find Stuart's column. Stuart's aide, Major Andrew Venable, finally found Lee on July 1 and Stuart rode to Gettysburg that night.



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Stuart's ride had gone pretty much as he said it would so Lee had little for which to blame him. To fault Jeb Stuart for Confederate failures at Gettysburg doesn't make sense. If you want to read more about it, get a copy of "Saber and Scapegoat" (by Mark Nesbitt).

We thank the "Colonel" Tom Nanzig of Ann Arbor, MI for the use of his September 1996 column.

Civil War Essentials – Weather – Life in a Tent

During the Gettysburg Campaign of June and July 1863, Confederate staff officers Sandie Pendleton and Hunter McGuire of the Second Corps had an unpleasant experience with Mother Nature. Sandie wrote his mother about what happened.

Just about daylight I was stirred up by McGuire's exclamation that it was raining-turned over to see & turned right into a puddle of water some six inches deep. I had to get up & found the tent full of water, my blankets all wet & the hardest rain I ever saw. . .

In July 1861, Union soldier Francis C. Barlow (later to be a hero at Gettysburg) described for his mother how his tent had been swamped several times. "If I had stayed home & gone out & slept in the pig pen at night, I should have had about the same experience that we have had here...."

Clara Barton after 2nd Bull Run and Chantilly

Volunteer nurse Clara Barton stayed behind at Fairfax Station as the Union Army retreated toward Washington after the debacle at 2nd Bull Run. She worked constantly, helping wounded soldiers get on railroad cars to take them away from the battlefield. Clara described trying to get some rest during a short break.



THE SIBLEY TENT.

"A little Sibley tent (picture left) had been hastily pitched for me in a slight hollow upon the hillside. Your imaginations will not fail to picture its condition. Rivulets of water had rushed through it during the last three hours. Still, I attempted to reach it, as its white surface, in the darkness, was a protection from the wheel of wagons and trampling of beasts.

*. . .but at last, I grasped the welcome canvas, and a well-established brook which washed in on the upper side at the opening that served as a door, meet me on my entrance. My entire floor was covered with water, not an inch of dry, solid ground. I sought the highest side of my tent which I remembered was grass grown, and ascertaining that the water was not very deep, I sank down...
...I slept two hours...I sprang to my feet dripping wet, covered with ridges of dead grass and leaves, wrung the water from my hair and skirts, and went forth again to my work".*

Quiz Answers:

1. Wisconsin and New Jersey
2. Joseph Holt and David E. Twiggs
3. Charles Francis Adams (Britain) and William L. Dayton (France)
4. Gouverneur K. Warren and George Sykes
5. Hugh Judson Kilpatrick and "The Battle of Kilpatrick's Pants".