



It was “*the deepest scheme that ever emanated from the brains of Yankees,*” declared an edition of the *Southern Confederacy*. The “*scheme*” referred to involved two dozen Ohio soldiers, dressed in civilian garb, who would seize a locomotive on the Western & Atlantic Railroad in Georgia and race northward sabotaging railroad bridges and track between Atlanta and Chattanooga. If isolated, Chattanooga would presumably fall to advancing Union forces. The “*brains*” behind this plot was James J. Andrews, a Virginia-born, Kentuckian, who, prior to the war was a house painter and singing coach. According to one admirer, Andrews’ greatest asset as a Union spy was he so resembled “*the ideal Southern officer.*” A Georgia stationmaster agreed, saying of Andrews, “*I’d as soon have suspected Mr. Jefferson Davis.*”

On April 12, 1862, the raiders rendezvoused in Marietta, Georgia. Boarding a train they headed ten miles north to Big Shanty. When a breakfast stop was announced, Andrews and his raiders uncoupled the 25-ton, wood-burning locomotive, the “**General**,” its tender, and three boxcars—and took off. William A. Fuller, the Confederate conductor, and Anthony Murphy, foreman of the railway shop at Atlanta, realized instantly what had happened and started in pursuit—first on foot, then on a handcar, and finally in an engine. Other Confederates joined the chase as three locomotives—the “**Yonah**,” the “**William R. Smith**,” and the “**Texas**”—pursued the “**General**,” capable of traveling in excess of 60 miles per hour.

Andrews’ raiders cut some telegraph wires, piled crossties on the track, and unsuccessfully tried to burn a few railroad bridges. Finally the 8-hour, 87 mile chase ended two miles north of Ringgold as the “**General**” ran out of fuel. Andrews gave the order to flee, and one raider remembered, “*the boys lit out like a flock of quail.*” All were captured within a week, and being out of uniform, they were tried as spies. Andrews and seven others (selected at random) were sentenced to hang. Andrews’ execution took place in Atlanta on June 7 at the corner of Third and Juniper Streets. The other seven were hanged on June 18. In October of 1862 eight incarcerated raiders overwhelmed their guards and escaped to Union lines. The remaining six were paroled in March of 1863 and were awarded the Medal of Honor. Subsequently, 13 more Medals of Honor were given to Andrews’ Raiders.

Our speaker this month is Dan LeBlond who will detail the story of “*The Great American Train Chase.*” Dan is a retired Computer Programmer from Ford Motor Company and the President of the Plymouth Historical Society since 1992. When the Society acquired Dr. Weldon Petz’s collection, Dan enrolled in Eastern Michigan University’s Historical Preservation Master’s Degree Program. As a Historic Preservation consultant, Dan has helped with numerous preservation projects in a variety of Michigan cities. On **MONDAY, APRIL 28**, Dan will take us aboard the “*General*” with James Andrews and his raiders. It should be quite a ride.

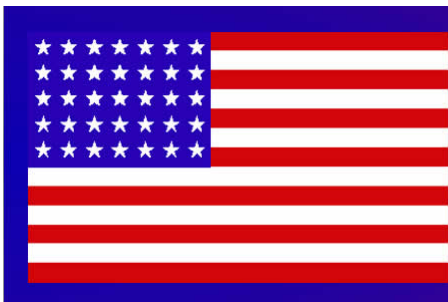
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Last month the MRRT was treated to a unique program entitled, “*Images as Living Historians.*” **Karen Thyer** starred as Mother Bickerdyke and **Don Allen** portrayed an inspector for the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Afterward they performed some fine Civil War music with a fiddle, banjo, and guitar. If you weren’t in attendance, you missed a special performance.

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Sadly, the Michigan Regimental announces that long-time member, Robert Archer, passed away on March 6. Bob joined the MRRT in 1993. He was a great guy and will be sorely missed by our organization.

FALL FIELD TRIP: Last month the sign-up sheet was passed around for our Shenandoah Valley Trip (Saturday/Sunday, October 18-19). This month Trip Chairman Jerry Maxwell will not be in attendance. You can call Jerry (248-363-1710) to add your name to the list, or you can wait until the May meeting to sign up.

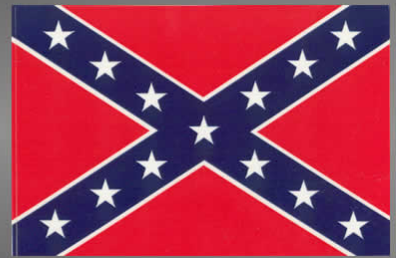


QUIZ: All questions pertain to the Medal of Honor

1. Which of Andrews' Raiders were the first two to be awarded the Medal of Honor?
2. Which Civil War regiment (864 men) was awarded the Medal of Honor for simply re-enlisting in June of 1863? Eventually, these Medals were rescinded in 1917 as were 46 more from other states. Which famous Civil War scout, Pony Express rider, Indian fighter, and Old West showman had his Medal taken away?
3. Captain Frank D. Baldwin of Constantine, Michigan received two Medals of Honor [one at Peach Tree Creek, Georgia on July 12, 1864 and one during the Indian Wars at McClellan's Creek, Texas]. To which regiment did he belong in the Civil War? And, which Irish-born naval officer won two Medals of Honor [for action at Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864, and for saving a fellow sailor's life at Mobile Bay on April 26, 1865]?
4. Which private in the 11th New York Zouaves was awarded the Medal of Honor for killing James T. Jackson, the proprietor of the Marshall House, who had just killed Elmer Ellsworth? And, which Brigadier General, a known roué and famous for his transformation of the bugle call "Taps" to a slower tempo, was awarded a Medal of Honor at Gaines Mill for seizing the colors of the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteers and leading the men "under a galling fire"?
5. Which German-born Captain from the 1st Ohio Light Artillery on lease from the Army of the Grand Duke of Baden was awarded the Medal of Honor for his services at Chancellorsville? And, what was his colorful nickname?
6. Which Brigadier General severely wounded in the right arm, necessitating amputation, was awarded the Medal of Honor for leading the 61st New York Infantry in a charge at Fair Oaks and later established a treaty with the Apache chieftain, Cochise? And, First Sergeant Patrick Irwin of the 14th Michigan Infantry won a Medal of Honor at Jonesboro, Georgia when he was the first man over the enemy breastworks and personally captured which Confederate general?
7. Who is the only father-son combination to win a Medal of Honor? And, while the son won his Medal on April 1, 1942, where did the father win his Medal and which unit did he lead?
8. Which Colonel (later a general) of the 61st New York Infantry was severely wounded and was awarded a Medal of Honor at Chancellorsville and years later brought in the Apache renegade, Geronimo? And, which Colonel, later the youngest general in the Union army, was awarded the Medal for his actions at Fort Fisher, North Carolina?
9. Which Major General was awarded a Medal of Honor for his questionable defense of Little Round Top? And, which Brigadier General was given a Medal of Honor for his distinguished personal gallantry at Cemetery Ridge on July 3?
10. Of the 1527 Medals of Honor given during the Civil War, how many were awarded posthumously for heroics? And, what unlikely position in the army did Medal of Honor winners John Cook, James P. Landis, Charles Reed, Ferdinand F. Rohm, Charles Schorn, and Thomas M. Wells all hold?

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Thomas Ward Custer, the younger brother of George, signed up with the 21st Ohio Infantry at the tender age of 16 on September 2, 1861. Serving in Kentucky and Tennessee, the lad proved himself a good soldier, but promotions were few. George finagled a second lieutenant's commission in the 6th Michigan Cavalry for brother Tom on November 8, 1864. In public, relations between the two brothers remained stiff and formal. "If anyone thinks it is a soft thing to be a commanding officer's brother," one of George's officers stated, "*he misses his guess.*" When left alone, however, the Custer boys unbuckled their sword belts and scuffled in the general's quarters as if they were still in the farmyard of their father's Ohio farmstead. George's pride for Tom's heroics on the battlefield clearly showed. "*To prove to you how I value and admire my brother as a soldier,*" beamed George, "*I think that he should be the general and I the captain.*"

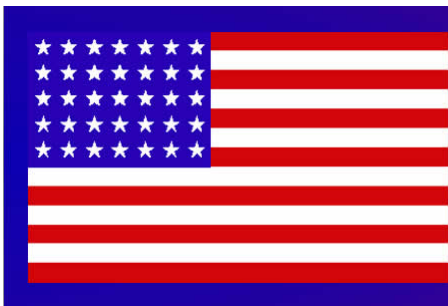


On April 3, 1865, Tom Custer led a pursuit of retreating Confederates at Namozine Church. Capturing an enemy flag, three Confederate officers, and eleven enlisted men, Tom earned a Medal of Honor. Merely three days later on April 6, Tom was at it again at Saylor's Creek. Here he spurred ahead into the midst of the enemy and reached for another Rebel flag. The Confederate color bearer, however, fired his pistol pointblank at Tom's head. The blast burned Tom's face and speckled it with black powder; the ball plowed through his cheek and passed out behind his ear, throwing him flat on the horse's rump. Reeling back instantly in his saddle, Tom drew his revolver with his left hand, killed his assailant, and caught the tottering banner with his right. Waving his prize in triumph, Tom wheeled his mount around and dashed through the melee, blood streaming down his face, to show the standard to his brother George. Sighting his brother, Tom yelled: "*Armstrong, the damned rebels have shot me, but I've got my flag!*" George immediately ordered his brother to get medical attention for the wound, but Tom ignored the command, desiring to go back into battle. Proudly, George put his brother under arrest and had him conducted to a surgeon. A second Medal of Honor would soon adorn Tom Custer's neck.

Eleven years later on Sunday, June 25, 1876, the Custer brothers and the 7th Cavalry rode into Indian Country at the Little Big Horn River in Montana. In mid-afternoon the Indians attacked and won a magnificent victory. George Custer had been shot in the temple and left breast, but his body had not been mutilated nor scalped. A fingertip had been removed and an awl had been shoved into one ear. Tom's body, however, was a hideous sight, mangled beyond recognition. He lay face down, bristling with arrows, the back of his skull smashed. The only identification was a goddess of liberty and flag tattoo, and the initials T.W.C. above the right elbow. He had been scalped, and arrows quilled his crushed skull. One arrow had been shot into the top of his head with such force that it penetrated the brain and could not be pulled out. One observer noted that the skull was "*crushed in as flat as a man's hand.*" His throat had been cut; his eyes and tongue had been torn out. His belly was slashed both horizontally and vertically so the entrails protruded. His heart and liver had been carved out, his thighs gashed, his genitals cut off. Two-hundred and sixty-six of Custer's command had fallen that day. Included among the dead were a younger Custer brother, Boston, a nephew Henry Armstrong Reed, and a brother-in-law, James Calhoun.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Jacob Parrott received the first and William Bensinger the second
2. 27th Maine Volunteer Infantry and William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody
3. 19th Michigan Infantry and John Cooper
4. Francis E. Brownell and Daniel Butterfield
5. Hubert Dilger and "Leather Breeches"
6. Oliver Otis Howard and Daniel Govan
7. Arthur and Douglas MacArthur and Missionary Ridge/24th Wisconsin Infantry
8. Nelson Miles and Galusha Pennypacker
9. Daniel E. Sickles and Alexander S. Webb
10. 12 and all were buglers



Note of interest:

Civil War: 12 posthumous Medals of Honor of 1527= .00078%

Vietnam War: 151 of 239= 63%

Korean War: 93 of 131= 71%

World War II: 244 of 471= 52%

World War I: 34 of 127= 27%

Reminder of our meeting on **MONDAY, APRIL 28**. You'll hear **Dan LeBlond's** presentation of the Andrews' Raid, "*The Great American Train Chase*." We will still meet in the Farmington Library at Grand River and Farmington Road. The meeting begins at 6:30 P.M. Hope you'll be there.

Have you tried our website? Give it a look-see: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.