



MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT is celebrating its 56th year in 2016—and this month is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership. Membership remains \$20 a year—or \$5 for students. Checks should be made out to **Don Kadar** and

can be mailed to his home at **61895 Fairland Drive, South Lyon, MI 48178**; or simply brought to the meeting and given to Don or Jeanie Graham. Cash is also welcomed.

Our Monday, April 25, 2016 meeting begins at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library. Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

The planning for the Roundtable’s visit to the Antietam, Maryland battlefield is already making significant progress. The tour is scheduled for Saturday, October 8th and Sunday, October 9th, 2016 with our guide Scott Patchen. Total cost for the tour will depend upon how many people participate.

Each tour participant must provide their own transportation to Fredrick, Maryland. Once there, we will have a bus to take us around the various battlefield sites.

We will be staying at **the Hampton Inn, Fredrick-Fort Detrick, MD.** The hotel’s address is 1565 Opossumtown Pike, Fredrick. Their telephone number for **room reservations is 301-696-1565** to book at the MCR rate of \$149/night + tax for a king room. Block rate cutoff is Wednesday, September 7, 2016. **We do not have to stay at the hotel but the bus will leave from there each morning. The pre-tour meeting will be held at the Hotel on Friday, October 7, 2016 at 7:30 pm.**

Our Saturday night banquet will be at the Old South Mountain Inn at 6132 Old National Pike in Boonsboro, MD. The cost for dinner at this 275 year-old stone tavern is \$45/person. The menu choices are Prime Rib, Salmon, and Vegetarian.

For more information (also to sign-up for the trip), call Mollie Galate (313.530.8516), Linda Gerhardt (586.588.2712), or Jeanie Graham (248.225.7596).

The Roundtable welcomes our long-time friend Tom Nanzig, who will present “Nuns under the Guns”. Nurses



were crucial to caring for the wounded of both sides during the war. The inscription on the Washington D.C. monument to the women religious nurses reads, *“They comforted the dying, nursed the wounded, carried hope to the imprisoned, gave in his name a drink of water to the thirsty –*

To the memory and in honor of the various orders of Sisters who gave their services as nurses on battlefields and in hospitals during the Civil War.

Recently, PBS began on a new series on Civil War nurses, *Mercy Street*.

Tom will help us remember the contributions that these often forgotten nuns who served as nurses made during the war.

Mr. Nanzig has spoken to our group on several occasions, most recently a two-part series on Washington Civil War monuments. Presently, he is the Vice-President and Program Chair for the Ann Arbor Civil War Roundtable. He has written or edited several Civil War books, including The Civil War Memoirs of a Virginia Cavalryman, Lt. Robert T. Hubbard, Jr. and the 3rd Virginia Cavalry.

Correction: The summary of Bill Cottrell’s February presentation should have said that over 1,000,000 people viewed President Grant’s funeral procession in New York. The procession was the largest public gathering in North America up to that time.



The Michigan Regimental Roundtable greatly appreciates the fascinating insights about President Lincoln's assassination offered by Dr. Ernest Lawrence Abel in his presentation "A Finger in Lincoln's Brain" at the March meeting. Dr. Abel began his talk by noting that the Civil War took the lives of about 750,000 Americans which represented perhaps 2.5% of the entire US population.

A spirit of joy spread throughout the North after the news of Appomattox reached it. The president gave a speech in which he suggested that some Negroes ought to be given the right to vote. John Wilkes Booth, an actor with southern sympathies who had taken no part in the war, heard this and he vowed to kill Lincoln who he blamed for the war and its outcome. Booth, who came from an acting family, had been born in Maryland. Mary Todd Lincoln wanted to attend a play and chose "Our American Cousin" starring Laura Keane playing at Ford's Theater. General and Mrs. Grant were invited to accompany the Lincolns but Grant found a plausible excuse to decline as his wife had a strained relationship with Mrs. Lincoln (as did many others). In the end a young army officer, Major Rathbone, and Clara Harris his fiancée accompanied the Lincolns to the theater on the fateful night. Booth had learned of the Lincolns planned attendance when he stopped earlier at the theater to pick up his mail.



On the fatal evening of April 14 the President and his wife arrived at the theater in the rain and attempted to make their way to their box without fanfare but Lincoln was spotted by the audience who rose to applaud. Booth, who knew the theater well, had seen that the Grants were not present and assumed that the Lincolns would be alone in the box. He planned to strike when the main punch line of the play would elicit loud audience laughter. As he came through the box door, he was surprised to see Rathbone and Harris and hesitated slightly. Still, his shot from a .45 caliber Derringer pistol struck the president in the back of the head. Rathbone arose and attempted to seize Booth but the latter wounded him with a knife he was carrying. Booth then leapt to the stage but, having caught a spur on a flag, landed awkwardly and broke a bone in his lower leg. He was able to exit the theater and escape on a waiting horse.

Meanwhile, in response to Rathbone's call for a doctor's assistance for the president, a series of doctors arrived at the box. The first was Dr. Leale (**pictured to left**), a doctor for only a few weeks. He initially thought Lincoln, like Rathbone, had been stabbed but then found the head wound and removed a blood clot from the wound's entrance. The heavy, low velocity ball had entered Lincoln's head at the occipital lobe of the brain. Both Leale and Dr. Taft, the second to arrive, probed the wound with their fingers to see if they could locate the bullet, the accepted practice at the time.



It was agreed by all that Lincoln would not survive a carriage ride through the rainy night over rutted roads to the White House and he was therefore carried to a rented room across the street normally occupied by a government clerk who was away. Additional doctors including the US Surgeon General and Lincoln's family doctor arrived and metal probes were used to try to detect the ball's location. Of course, neither fingers nor probes were sterile. Certain symptoms, such as the degree of eye dilation, were understood to give clues as to the areas of

the brain affected by the ball.

President Lincoln died on the following day, April 15, at 7:22 AM. He was removed to the White House and an autopsy performed by an Army doctor named Woodward. Due to the procedure used, although the bullet was recovered, its exact path and location were not precisely determined. Lincoln was then embalmed by a man named Cattell. During the long ceremonial train procession to Springfield, cosmetic repairs had to be made repeatedly to Lincoln's face to disguise the



blackening resulting from decomposition. The president's remains were fated to suffer further indignities before he finally found a secure permanent resting place many years later.

Dr. Abel indicated that Lincoln *might* have survived his wound if modern standards of care had been available since he lasted through the critical first hour after the attack but at best he would have been impaired for the remainder of his life.

MRRT Minutes for March 28, 2016: The **Call to Order** 6:40 pm, with 40 people present for the business meeting **Pledge** Dedicated to the Capitol police who took down the shooter today **Introduction of Guests and New Members** guests Joyce and George Kopp and Jennifer Perrian **Secretary's Report** Approved **Newsletters** Bob Newill read from the Toledo Mini-Bulletin, Indianapolis Hardtack, Cincinnati Canister, Cleveland Charger, and NYC Dispatch **Trip** Discussed on page 1 of the newsletter **Preservation** None **Website** Gerry Furi updates the website for us every month **Program** No update **Items of Interest** Ken – Prairie Grove battlefield is worth visiting. David is planning to visit the Trans Mississippi/Red River Campaign where his great grandfather fought at the Battle of Pleasant Hill. He's expecting a great trip. We are reminded that VMI is the only military academy allowed to march with fixed bayonets because of the New Market battle. Don Garlit enjoyed Collapse of the Confederacy, by Charles Wesley, because it was filled with statistics. **Old Business** None **New Business** None

Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to "Nuns under the Guns".

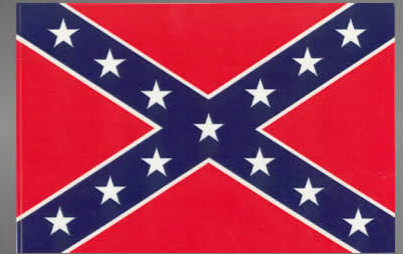
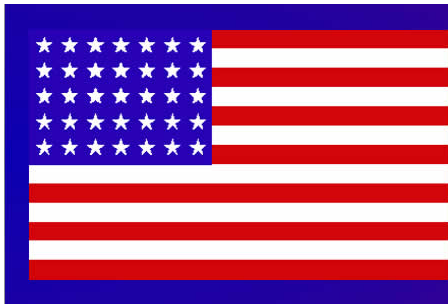
1. Were the majority of Civil War nurses male or female? Why?
2. How many women provided nursing care for the two armies? What was unusual about the Union nurses?
3. Why were the Catholic sisters valuable as nurses?
4. Who was Dorothea Dix?
5. What was significant about the Sisters of the Holy Cross?

**News from the Front – July 2, 1863 Your Billy Yank Reporter
"The 19th Maine at the Emmitsburg Road"**

We have all heard the story of the 20th Maine and its exploits during the battle of Gettysburg. There was another Maine regiment which had an interesting story as well. This regiment was the 19th Maine, led by Colonel Francis Heath (pictured to right). They were part of Harrow's 1st Brigade, 2nd Division of the 2nd Corps. The rest of the brigade consisted of the 15th Massachusetts, 1st Minnesota, and the 82nd New York. The 19th Maine had been in service for about a year but had yet to engage the enemy. During late afternoon on the Second Day, Humphrey's Federal Division was stationed along the Emmitsburg Road north of the Peach Orchard. Their lines had started to collapse because of the attack from the left flank by Barksdale's Brigade and Wilcox's and Lang's Brigades from the west.

The 2nd Corps commander, Major General Winfield Hancock was looking for units to assist the 3rd Corps and plug the hole in the line caused by the removal of Caldwell's Division. He positioned the 19th Maine about 400 yards south of the Codori Barn in support of a battery he had placed there earlier. As the 19th reached their position **General Hancock jumped from his horse and grabbed the first man on the left and led him forward a few yards. He planted the soldier firmly on the spot and shouted "Will you stay here?" This man, who probably wished to please the large fellow with two stars on his shoulder straps managed to reply "I'll stay here General until Hell freezes over"**. Hancock ordered the regiment to form there, remounted his horse and rode off. Finally in position, Heath ordered his men to lie down.





The 19th Maine, while lying in the pasture southwest of Codori's Barn watched the smoke and heard the noise of battle moving in their direction. Humphreys' 3rd Corps troops were fleeing toward them in a disorganized mass with the Confederates in hot pursuit. Colonel Heath walked the front of his regiment's line, telling his men to lie still and let the 3rd Corps' fugitives pass over them. **When a segment of the 3rd Corps was about 150 yards away, an officer,**



identified as General Humphreys, rode up and ordered Colonel Heath to have his regiment stand stop the fugitives with their bayonets, Heath refused, fearing that if his men stood they might be infected by disorder and swept away. Humphreys was in no mood to argue with a Colonel and rode along the 19th's line ordering it to stand. Heath followed the General, countermanding his order. The regiment obeyed its colonel. After harsh words were exchanged Heath ended the conversation by saying *"I was placed here by an officer of higher rank for a purpose, and I do not intend to go to the rear. Let your troops form in the rear and we will take care of the enemy in front."*

When the 19th Maine's front was clear of fugitives, Heath ordered the 19th to its feet. At that moment, the Confederate line emerged through the smoke about 50 yards away. This was Lang's Florida brigade. The 19th opened fire and brought the Rebels to a halt. The two lines traded eight volleys at a range of about 30 yards.

It was nearly dusk and the smoke was so heavy that visibility was limited. Colonel Heath received a report of Confederates flanking his left. They saw a double line of Confederates not more than 25 yards away. The company on the 19th's left refused their line and poured enfilading fire into the enemy who retreated out of sight. **Heath returned to his post behind the center of his line only to learn that Rebels appeared to be passing around the 19th's right. Hell was freezing over.**

Heath faced the 19th to the rear and marched it back toward the crest of Cemetery Ridge. After going a short distance, the regiment emerged from the smoke, and there were no Rebels on its flank. Since its flanks were safe, the 19th faced about and charged.

The four Confederate brigades involved in the fighting on this line along the Emmitsburg Road had dispatched one Union division and part of another. Darkness was approaching and their ranks were becoming disorganized. When the counterattacks came from the Union line they started their retreat back to Seminary Ridge. The Union regiments halted their advance near the Emmitsburg Road. **When the 19th Maine reached this area a staff officer rode up and asked Colonel Heath where his regiment was going. "We are chasing the Rebels" Heath replied.** The officer advised him to go no farther. The 1st and 2nd Corps set up their picket line along the road and the attacking regiments, along with the 19th Maine, returned to Cemetery Ridge.

"Nuns under the Guns" Quiz Answers

1. The majority of Civil War nurses were male. Nursing anyone other than family would expose women to nakedness and filth.
2. About 9,000 women provided nursing care for the Union soldiers and another 1,000 for the Confederates. Half the Union nurses were freed slaves.
3. The Catholic sisters had accumulated centuries of experience caring for the sick. They were the only trained nurses in the country when the war began. The sisters ran 28 American hospitals in 1860.
4. Dorothea Dix was a public health advocate who appointed 3,214 official military nurses. She did not want attractive women as nurses.
5. The U.S. Navy has recognized the Sisters of the Holy Cross as pioneers of the Navy Nurse Corps for their work with wounded soldiers on a ship sailing the Ohio River.

