



**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Because of the Memorial Day Holiday, our meeting will be on **MONDAY, MAY 19** instead of the last Monday of the month.

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The intense struggle at Gettysburg lasted three days with losses on the two sides combined (killed, wounded, captured, and missing) standing at a staggering 43,454. No other battle before or since has yielded such horrific numbers in American casualties. The two opposing armies had totaled 163,761 men, with a 26.5% casualty rate. The Army of the Potomac had 66 generals who were listed as participants in the great battle; the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia generals numbered 53. Ten of these generals were killed or mortally wounded (4 Federal, 6 Confederate). Of the 119 generals who fought at Gettysburg some stood as stalwarts going beyond the typical call of duty. Others faltered under the extreme duress of battle as neither side was without its assortment of error makers who ignominiously failed at their given moment.

This month the MRRT gladly welcomes back longtime member, **Martin Brosnan**, who will point out six officers (three from each side) at Gettysburg who shared a common experience: all six were graduates of West Point, each residing last in his respective class. The endearing, but taunting, nickname given to all such West Pointers was simply “goat”—hence the title of Marty’s talk—“*The Goats of Gettysburg*.” A former President of the MRRT, Dr. Brosnan is a retired principal from the South Lyon school district. Marty last spoke to our group in November of 2005 with an exceptional program: “Maybe It Was Murder, Maybe It Was Something Else—History’s Mysteries, Part II.” His return as our guest speaker has been long overdue. Come see for yourself—**MONDAY, MAY 19**.

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A special thank you goes out to last month’s speaker, Don Allison, whose program, “How Private Peck Put Down the Rebellion,” was greatly received by the audience. The talk entailed some of the humorous readings of Pvt. George W. Peck from his 1885 book as well as a biographical sketch of this Wisconsin soldier. A brisk sale of these books followed the presentation.

**FALL FIELD TRIP:** A phenomenal two days, Sat./Sun. October 11-12, at Vicksburg have been set up for our Annual Field Trip. On Saturday we will visit the city of Vicksburg and the surrounding area. Sunday has been set aside for the tour of the Vicksburg Battlefield. If you’ve never seen the amazing monuments on this battlefield, you are in for a stunning surprise. Our guide, Terry Winchel, is simply the best for this tour. Everything has been set up for you. All we need is more members to sign up. Currently we have 35 people enrolled for the trip. Obviously, the more who sign up, the lower the cost will be for the bus, guide, etc. Rather than quoting you a price at this time, trip Chairman Jerry Maxwell will wait one more month to see if the numbers get any higher. If you haven’t signed up for the trip but would like to, please call Jerry at 248-363-1710.

**YEARLY DUES:** We still have some folks who are delinquent on their dues for 2008. Check your newsletter envelope; if you find the Dreaded Red Dot next to your name, you know you owe. If no Red Dot appears, you’re in the clear. You can take care of this lapse by paying Treasurer Carroll Tietz at this month’s meeting or by sending him a check addressed to Carroll at 10640 Gamewood Dr. South Lyon, 48178. If by chance you’ve recently paid, kindly ignore the Dot. Those who haven’t paid by this month, however, will no longer receive the newsletter in the month of June.

**MRRT 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY:** We are exceptionally proud of being the state of Michigan’s second oldest Civil War Round Table as we will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in merely two years. At last month’s meeting six people enlisted to help organize a dinner, guest speakers, etc., in honor of our mid-century existence. You too are welcome to



sign up for the Committee. A word of warning, it will be a major commitment with plenty of meetings to get the planning just right. Whether you join or not, your suggestions will be welcomed.

**QUIZ: All questions pertain to generals and officers at the Battle of Gettysburg.....**

1. Which 4 Union generals were killed or mortally wounded at Gettysburg?
2. Which 6 Confederate generals were killed or mortally wounded, including one on the retreat back into Virginia?
3. Which Rhode Islander was the oldest general in the Union Army at age 62? He and his New Yorkers “saved” Culp’s Hill. And, which Wisconsin 22-year-old lieutenant led Battery A, 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery, and forfeited his life while defending Cemetery Ridge with his guns?
4. Which Confederate general and divisional commander was on his way to Gettysburg to obtain shoes, when fighting broke out outside the town? And, when wounded in the head that day, what inadvertently saved his life?
5. Which Federal from Maine headed the Eleventh Corps that was thrown back on the first day of fighting? And, which of his generals spent the three days of fighting hiding in a pigsty?
6. Which two Confederate generals were captured at the battle? And, which Confederate major, later killed at the Battle of Franklin, led Jeb Stuart’s horse artillery?
7. Which 26-year-old Pennsylvania-born, Harvard graduate, and colonel in the Fifth Corps was mortally wounded at Little Round Top, dying on July 7, from a bullet that passed through his groin fracturing the femur bone? And, which of his regiments reportedly ran from their position?
8. Which major, a 23-year-old Virginian, led George Pickett’s artillery? Also, where, as a general, was he mortally wounded on April 6, 1865? And, which 20-year-old artillerist, known as the “Boy Major” and the “Young Napoleon,” (of Richard Ewell’s Corps) was mortally wounded while directing his guns from Benner Hill?
9. Which 31-year-old New Hampshire colonel of Winfield Scott Hancock’s Second Corps fell mortally wounded (dying the next day) from the fighting on July 2 in the Wheatfield? And, which controversial general was George Meade’s Chief of Staff?
10. Which 22-year-old Virginia gunner, later killed at Five Forks, led a battalion of A.P. Hill’s artillery? And, who was R.E. Lee’s Chief of Artillery?

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Nicknamed “*Long Sol*” because of his towering, ramrod straight 6’6” frame, Solomon Meredith was an ambitious man who had spent the antebellum years honing his political skills. Born into a poor North Carolina Quaker family on May 29, 1810, Meredith grew up uneducated and without a trade. At age 19, facing continued poverty in his home state, he walked to Indiana where his first employment consisted of cutting cord wood for six dollars a month. From this low beginning, Meredith saved his money, paid for his schooling, married, and fathered a family. His commanding presence and natural leadership won him election as a sheriff at age 24, followed by 4 terms to the state legislature, and an appointment as U.S. Marshal for Indiana by President John Tyler in 1849.

When the Civil War broke out, Meredith used his political connections to become colonel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry. Although an imposing figure in height, his lack of military experience caused concern among some of his men. The regimental surgeon dourly reported, “*Our Col. has no practical sense. The officers have all found it out....Bad administration is seen and felt throughout the Regt. Our Col. unfortunately wants to attend to all departments down to the smallest minutiae. Of course he fails of necessity.*” The same surgeon penned 18 days later, “*You would be startled to hear how the officers and soldiers talk about ‘Old Sol.’ It seems that he is about being promoted to a Brigadier. If he is not, there will soon be a petition signed by the whole Regt. for him to resign.*” Another member of the regiment wrote that Meredith was “*notoriously unfit to command.*”



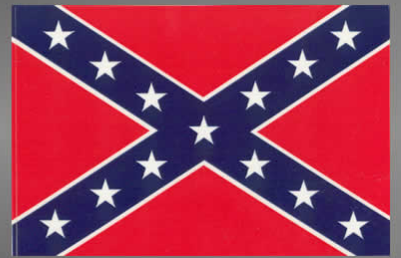
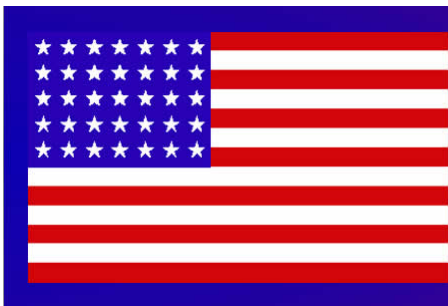
Meredith's political acumen and friendship with Governor Oliver P. Morton and President Lincoln helped keep him in command. Furthermore, once the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana saw combat, his soldiers fought remarkably well. Placed in the famous Iron Brigade the Hoosiers quickly showed their mettle. Their first major action was at the Brawner Farm at Second Bull Run fighting against Stonewall Jackson's Corps. The 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana lost 259 of 423 engaged. Meredith suffered a fall from his horse which put him out of action. He recovered in time to rejoin his men on their march through Maryland. He commanded his regiment at South Mountain, but missed the fighting at Antietam claiming that his recent injury and exhaustion had taken their toll. Again using his political influence in Washington D.C. and Indiana, Meredith was promoted to Brigadier General on October 6, 1862, and took over command of the Iron Brigade on June 16, 1863. Still many questioned his ability. As he marched his Brigade of Black Hats toward Gettysburg, the 53-year-old Meredith had still not proven himself competent as a military leader.

Arriving at McPherson's Ridge to relieve Brig. Gen. John Buford's embattled troopers at 10:30 A.M., the men of the Iron Brigade made an awesome sight—their black Jeff Davis hats rolled up and looped on the right side, adorned with a plume and a light blue infantry ribbon. These men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, and the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan had won laurels as the Union army's most audacious combat unit. Their commander, Solomon Meredith, was yet to confirm his value. When Meredith pressed his men into the action, the Iron Brigade took a terrific pounding. Eight color-bearers of the 19<sup>th</sup> fell that morning. Meredith's men fought like the demons of their vaunted reputation as they routed the Confederates to their front in bloody conflict. The Black Hats lost two-thirds of 1800 effectives with the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan suffering 399 casualties of 496 engaged. Meredith had successfully led his men in one of the war's most crucial spots. While pulling his men back, however, Meredith, was severely wounded when a shell exploded nearby. According to a newspaper account, he *"was struck in the head by a fragment of the shell and stunned,"* the same exploding shell striking his horse four times. The horse *"fell dead, his body crushing the general's leg and side frightfully. The wound [to Meredith's head] fractured the skull and affected the brain very seriously. The fall broke several ribs and tore them loose from the breastbone....and so seriously injured the right leg that it is yet after nearly two months, greatly discolored."*

Oddly, little was written by the Iron Brigade's regimental commanders on Meredith's part in the battle, and he never returned to command the illustrious unit. He remained incapacitated until November, and would later be assigned to minor command posts in Cairo, Illinois and Paducah, Kentucky. Following the war he was Surveyor of the Montana Territory and returned to farm in Indiana where he raised prize livestock. His military record never came close to what he desired. Two of his three sons who entered the Union army died during the war. *"Old Sol"* died at age 65 on October 2, 1875. His merit as a military man is still debated today.

## QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. John Reynolds, Samuel Zook, Stephen Weed, Elon Farnsworth
2. Paul Semmes, William Barksdale, Richard Garnett, Lewis Armistead, William Dorsey Pender, James Johnston Pettigrew
3. George Sears Greene and Alonzo Cushing
4. Henry Heth and tightly folded newspaper in his new hat that somewhat deflected the bullet
5. Oliver Otis Howard and Alexander Schimmelfennig
6. James J. Archer/Isaac Trimble and Robert F. Beckham
7. Strong Vincent and the 16<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry
8. James Dearing/High Bridge and Joseph W. Latimer
9. Edward Cross and Daniel Butterfield
10. Willie Pegram and William Pendleton



A last reminder for this month's meeting. You'll want to be in attendance—**MONDAY, MAY 19**—for **Dr. Martin Brosnan's** program, "*The Goats of Gettysburg.*" Our starting time is 6:30 P.M. at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). See you there! Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.