

With deepest regret the Michigan Regimental Round Table announces the passing of our own **Dr. Weldon Petz**. Weldon died on Thursday, April 28, at age eighty-eight. Truly a “Man For All Seasons,” Weldon’s legacy as a renown Abraham Lincoln expert will never be forgotten by any of the more than 5000 audiences he spoke to in his lifetime. But Weldon was far more than a Lincoln expert. Starting with his experience as a trombone player in the Big Band era, Weldon was also a famous Santa Claus collector and a noted baseball maven. (Weldon loved to talk about “his” 1934-1935 Detroit Tigers.) Our condolences are extended to his wife, Shirley, and his family. Will we miss him? Absolutely. But what a memory he has left us.

Program Chairman Jim Burroughs has requested that the membership be reminded that our program for the month of June will be **Show and Tell**. Just bring in any Civil War related object to share with the audience. This has been a popular program in the past as our members have brought in some rare and highly unusual relics.

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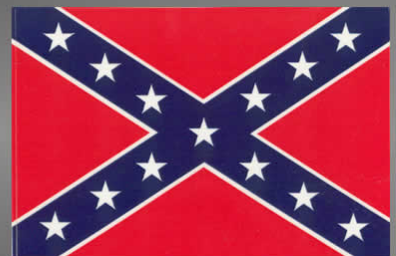
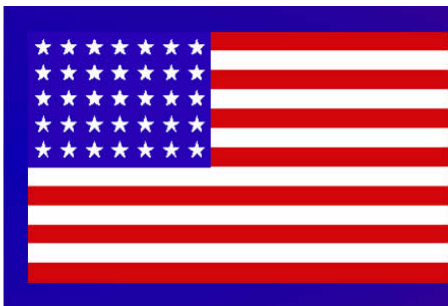
When the Civil War began Northern and Southern recruits had much in common. Nearly half of the Union recruits were farmers while almost two thirds of the Confederates shared the same occupation. More than 300 different occupations were represented in the Federal Army, and more than 100 in the Confederate. Interestingly, numerous Confederate recruits listed their prewar occupation simply as “gentleman.” The majority of the soldiers on both sides were white, native-born, Protestant, unmarried—and young. The minimum age for enlistment on either side was 18, and four out of five in both Armies were between that age and 29. Many of the rest were even younger. Charles Connect from Missouri served as a drummer boy at age 7.

Many senior citizens gladly enlisted as well. In July 1862, one E. Pollard gave his age as 62 when he joined the 5th North Carolina Infantry, although he was probably over 70; he was soon discharged because rheumatism prevented him from performing his soldierly duties. The distinction of being the oldest soldier in the War belonged to Curtis King, who enlisted in the 37th Iowa Infantry at the age of 80. King served nearly six months before being discharged for disability. His regiment, which was nicknamed the “*Graybeards*,” had 145 soldiers aged 60 or older.

The average Civil War soldier stood between five feet five inches and five feet nine. The shortest Federal soldier on record came from the 192nd Ohio Infantry and measured a mere three feet four inches. The tallest Federal was Captain David Van Buskirk of the 27th Indiana Infantry who stood at 6’10 ½” and weighed in at 380 pounds. Captured by the Confederates and taken to Richmond, even President Jefferson Davis came out to see him. As tall as Van Buskirk stood, he was no match for Confederate Henry Thruston of Texas who was an amazing 7’ 7 ¼” tall. Thruston was one of six brothers who all stood more than 6’ 6”. Thruston was wounded once during the war as a bullet barely grazed the top of his head. But for the most part, soldiers, no matter their size, age, or shape could relate to the comment made by Captain Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. of the 20th Massachusetts when he wrote his father, “*I started in this thing a boy; I am now a man.*”

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This month on **MONDAY, MAY 23**—and please note the week early meeting—our own member, **Gary Pike**, will present “*Getting’ Ready For War.*” An MRRT member since 1972, Gary, a native born Alabaman, had ancestors who fought for the Confederacy; one even fought for both sides! Gary not only attends our meetings, but he’s a member of



the Israel Richardson and George W. Lee Round Tables, the Waterford Historical Society and the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. To top it off he is also a proud member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans—Raphael Semmes, Camp 1321. For our meeting Gary will regale us with a portrayal of a “Reb” soldier as he prepares to go off to war. He will show his clothing and equipment as he prepares for his unexpected journey. You’ll want to be in attendance for this one!

The Michigan Regimental extends its thanks to last month’s speaker, **Marty Brosnan**, for his outstanding presentation, “*General George Thomas, USA, and Friends?*”

**QUIZ: All questions pertain to common soldiers.....**

1. What was the nickname of the small kit that soldiers carried which included needles, thread, and a thimble?!
2. What was a soldier referring to when he called a personal item “gunboats”?
3. How many bullets did a Union soldier carry in his cartridge box?
4. What was the basic difference between Union and Confederate canteens?
5. How much money would it cost a draftee to hire a substitute to go to war in his place?
6. In camps on both sides what time was reveille normally?
7. According to regulations, how many men could sleep in a Sibley tent?
8. In what type of pattern were soldiers supposed to sleep in a Sibley tent?
9. In a normal company of 100 men, how many privates were there?
10. What was the trim color on the uniform of an artillerist on both sides?

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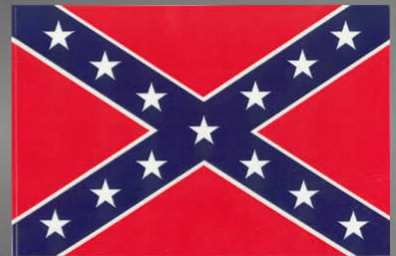
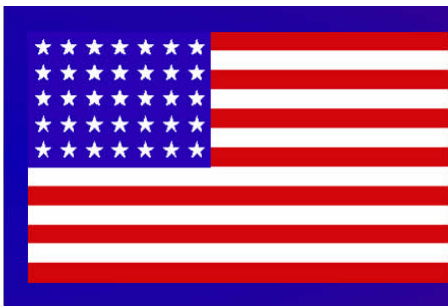
Gettysburg stories of common soldiers and non-generals.....

The first Confederate assault on Culp’s Hill proved costly. Brigade commander Colonel Isaac Avery had bravely but imprudently ridden his horse into the attack. He was the only mounted man in the column and was among the first to fall. Just as his men reached the Federal line at the base of the hill, he was hit by a musket ball that passed through his neck and shoulders and knocked him from his mount. The attack swept on without him and it was some time before the brigade knew he had fallen. Prostrate and alone, he perceived that his wound was fatal. His shoulder and right arm were shattered. But he took a pencil and paper from his pocket and scribbled a note to a fellow officer who succeeded to command. It stated simply: “*Tell my father I fell with my face to the enemy.*” The place where he fell was later marked by his men, but the crude marker was lost or obliterated long ago.

On the third day at Gettysburg a Southern soldier, waiting for the command to advance on Cemetery Ridge, rested a careless foot in the fork of a tree and dozed off to sleep. A shell hit and so mangled his ankle that he knew it would have to be amputated. He looked at the mutilated leg and drawled: “*Boys, I’ll be damned if it ain’t a thirty-day furlough.*”

As Confederate peppered Cemetery Ridge a gruff Federal colonel who never showed weakness was told he would be hit if he persisted in standing in the open. Just then a shell fragment tore his cheek and knocked out two teeth. Someone nearby asked solicitously if he were wounded. “*No sir,*” he barked, “*Just had a tooth pulled.*” He fought until the battle ended.

The 14th Tennessee Infantry had marched from Clarksville, its point of concentration in northwest Tennessee in 1861, with 960 men. It had moved across virtually all of the battlefields of Virginia and 365 bayonets when it went into the first



day's fight at Gettysburg. The battle on McPherson's Ridge had reduced the regiment to only 60 men commanded by a captain. Now on Cemetery Ridge where the wall turned, at what came to be known as the "*Bloody Angle*," all but three of the remaining 60 fell.

The 1st Texas Infantry had a kind of symbol of its spirit in a jolly youth under twenty, Will Barbee, who served as a courier for John Bell Hood. Barbee was described as "*a reckless daredevil*" utterly without fear. Rebel soldiers had learned that when a fight began, Barbee seemed always to be first in line. Now, someone called out, "*Here comes Barbee!*" The men saw the high-spirited youth dash up on a little sorrel, waving his hat. His horse fell but Barbee "*hit the ground running*," grabbed a rifle, jumped on top of a high rock behind which there were already many wounded, stood erect, exposed and fearless, and began firing. Below him the wounded loaded and passed up their guns, and he blazed away at any exposed Yankee. Finally Barbee was knocked off the rock with a wound in his leg. But he crawled back. Then he was hit in the other leg; again he got to his exposed perch. At length he was wounded so severely that he could not climb back unaided. He was last seen "*crying and cursing*" because the boys would not restore him to his place of danger.

Only a few minutes before the assault on Little Round Top, Private Joe Smith of the 4th Texas Infantry was feeling the heat of the sun. He soaked a white handkerchief in Plum Run, tied it around his head, and started marching toward the enemy. When some Confederates later buried him, they counted eleven bullet holes through the white target.

Captain Vines E. Turner of the 23rd North Carolina Infantry visited the battlefield in 1898. He walked the area where he had fought along the railroad. He stopped at the "*Iverson Pits*," where Confederates had been buried in shallow graves. Digging into the empty pits, Turner found "*a veritable mine of war relics*"—bullets, canister, and shrapnel fragments released as the bodies of the soldiers had decayed.

#### QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. "Housewife"
2. His shoes
3. 40
4. Union were made of metal, Confederate of wood
5. \$300
6. 5:00 A.M.
7. 20
8. Wheel-spoke fashion with their feet pointed toward the center
9. 82
10. Red

Please remember that our May meeting is always one week earlier than normal. On **MONDAY, MAY 23**, you'll be entertained by **Gary Pike** who will be presenting, "*Gettin' Ready For War*." Our meeting time is still 6:30 P.M. at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). Hope to see you there.....

Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>

*Old Sarge*