

This month the Roundtable welcomes back our friend Liz Stringer, who will discuss one of the major events of the Civil War, “Pickett’s Charge”. The Southern novelist William Faulkner, in his novel *Intruder in the Dust*, discussed the afternoon of July 3, 1863, “For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it’s still not yet two o’clock on that July afternoon in 1863, ... we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and that moment doesn’t need even a fourteen-year old boy to think this time.” Liz’s great ability to tell a story makes this a program you will not want to miss!

Liz is the President (and Tour Director) for the Abraham Lincoln Roundtable which meets in Plymouth. She previously spoke to our group on “Fredericksburg, Virginia during the Civil War” and “Elizabeth Van Lew, A Richmond Woman Who Spied for the Union”.

The Roundtable would like to thank Joseph Obidzinski for his excellent presentation, “Second Battle of Fredericksburg – May 3, 1863”. The battle at Fredericksburg was planned as a diversion for Union movement towards Chancellorsville. General John Sedgwick had approximately 40,000 men from the 1st and 6th Corps to keep the Confederates busy at Fredericksburg, the site of the Union’s disastrous battle the prior December. For both sides, this was a battle of poor communications and garbled orders. Sedgwick’s orders were to cross the Rappahannock River and launch an attack. Engineers put five spans across the river and the army drove the Confederates away from the river bank.

The Confederate commander was General Jubal Early, newly promoted to Major General and ironically from the same class at West Point as Sedgwick, had 9,000 men to cover the same nine miles that the whole Army of Northern Virginia covered during December 1862. Early’s orders were to hold the Union force, protect the supply line at Guinea Station and, if Sedgwick withdrew, join General Lee at Chancellorsville.

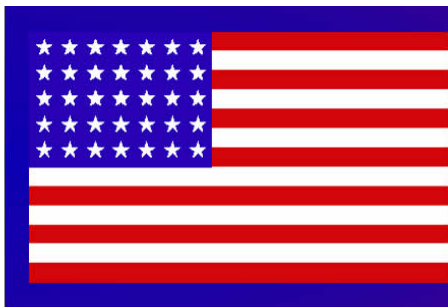
On May 2, Early received orders from Lee’s Chief of Staff, Colonel Chilton, to leave 2,000 men at Fredericksburg to hold the Federals and move the remainder to join Lee at Chancellorsville. Lee soon realized that Chilton had misinterpreted his intent, and upon rescinding the orders, gave Early the choice to join him or return to Fredericksburg. Early chose to return to Fredericksburg.

All the while, the Union army was having its own difficulties. Sedgwick was slow to seize the initiative as his men watched the Confederates leave . . . and come back to Fredericksburg. General Hooker further muddled things by issuing orders having Sedgwick move towards Richmond and Fredericksburg simultaneously.

On Sunday, May 3, Gibbons 27,000 men attacked Marye’s Heights. Although the initial assault floundered, as it had the previous December, a renewed furious effort swept the Federals forward and to the capture of Mayre’s Heights. Although Sedgwick’s orders were to move west towards Chancellorsville at dawn, his movement was delayed until 11 am as he brought his freshest troops to the front. A secondary contributor was the threat consideration still posed by Early. The delay, however, gave the Confederates time to counterattack Sedgwick at Salem Church but, partially due to poor execution, it failed and Sedgwick successfully retreated across the Rappahannock River to safety.

In the end, both Lee and Hooker were upset at their lieutenants but garbled and confusing orders issued from their commands were in large part to blame for the disappointing results.



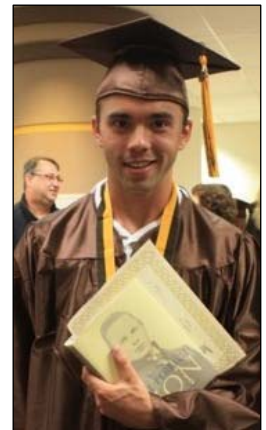


Quiz Questions: This month’s questions and answers reference Pickett’s Charge...

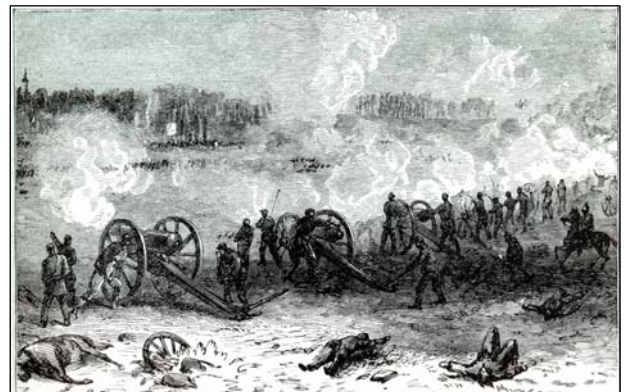
1. How many Confederate artillery pieces were set up for Pickett’s Charge? How many available guns were not used by the Army of Northern Virginia?
2. How many Confederate infantry were used in the initial assault? How many Unionists were waiting for them on Cemetery Ridge?
3. How did the Confederate assault become known as Pickett’s Charge?
4. Which Michigan regiment was involved with the repulse of Pickett’s Charge?
5. How long did the artillery bombardment and infantry assault last?

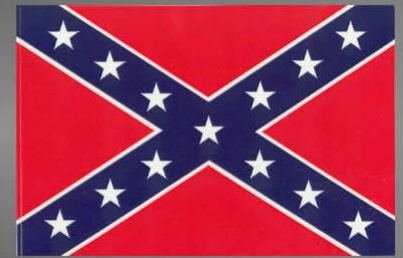
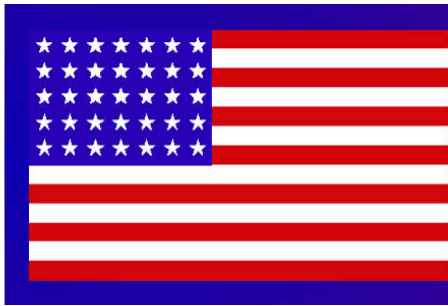
Odds & Ends:

- **Jerry Maxwell History Award Winners:** Ron Cleveland reports that Benjamin Wright and one other male student were selected as the 3rd annual recipients of the Jerry Maxwell award. As you may remember, the MRRT made a \$250 contribution, along with other members’ personal donations, towards the recognition of two outstanding history students from North Farmington High School in commemoration of Jerry’s tenure at that school. Ron also provided each award recipient a copy of Jerry’s book, *The Perfect Lion: The Life and Death of Confederate Artillerist John Pelham*. Benjamin has written a thank-you letter which has been attached for e-newsletter subscribers. We’d like to wish the students the very best in their educational endeavors.
- **Field Trip:** Mollie asked Scott Patchan for trip reading recommendations—and they are:
 - *The Collapse of the Confederacy* by Grimsley and Simpson
 - *The Cavalry at Appomattox* by Ed Longacre
 - *To Appomattox: Nine April Days, 1865* by Burke Davis (an easy read)
 - *A Stillness at Appomattox* by Bruce Catton
 - *History and Tour Guide of Five Forks, Hatcher’s Run and Namozine Church* by Chris Calins
- **Preservation:** Joe passes on the following: The CWT has begun a new campaign to purchase 306 total acres at a purchase price of \$1.3 million: 6 acres at Appomattox, VA; 15 at Bentonville, NC; 282 at Mansfield, LA; and 3 at Petersburg, VA. In other news, according to the latest information, there will be funding to insure the restoration mission at the Monitor Center.
- **June’s Civil War Website in Focus:** The Civil War Monitor magazine’s website includes several interesting Civil War related articles and reviews. www.civilwarmonitor.com



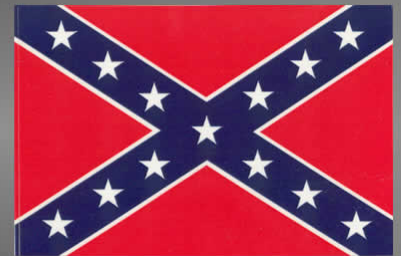
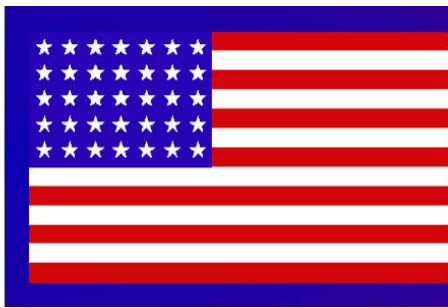
Civil War Sesquicentennial (June 1864): 1 Jun: The Battle of Cold Harbor begins. Lee shifts men from Richmond to the rivers near Cold Harbor. The Confederates attack Grant’s flank but are repulsed. Likewise Grant attacks Lee’s forces later this day but is too repulsed. Confederate forces dig-in. In the south, Sherman advances inexorably towards Atlanta. Recognizing the threat to his line of communication he states “*That devil Forrest . . . must be hunted down and killed if it costs 10,000 lives and bankrupts the Federal Treasury.*” To this end, Gen S.D. Sturgis is dispatched with 3,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry to deal with Forrest. **2 Jun:** Grant’s plan to assault Lee’s troops is delayed allowing the Confederates to further entrench. Gen Horace Porter says “*I noticed many of the soldiers had taken off their coats and seemed to be engaged in sewing up rents in them. On closer examination it was found that the men were calmly writing their names and addresses on slips of paper and pinning them on the backs of their coats so that*





their dead bodies might be recognized and their fate made known to their families at home. **3 Jun:** At 0430 hours Grant's troops rise and frontally assault Lee's lines. Some thirty minutes later 7,000 Union troops are killed or wounded. A second uncoordinated attack is ordered and quickly fails followed by a third command to attack again. This last command is largely ignored. Grant takes no further action and admits *"I regret this assault more than any one I have ever ordered."* The Federal men left wounded between the lines stayed there until a negotiated truce several days later—few survived this delay. Over the period of 1-3 June, Union casualties are approximated at 12,000 to the Confederate's 1,500. Grant observes in his memoirs, *"No advantage whatever was gained from the heavy loss we sustained."* **5 Jun:** In the Shenandoah Valley, CSA Gen W.E. Jones takes a stand against Gen Hunter's advance towards Staunton, VA. After a series of battles, the Confederates are pushed aside and Hunter's men enter Staunton the next day unopposed. **7 Jun:** Grant resolves he must move south across the James to threaten Petersburg. As a diversion he sends Sheridan's cavalry west to join Hunter. **8 Jun:** The National Union Convention in Baltimore nominates Lincoln for a second term as president and Andrew Johnson for vice-president. In KY, raider John Morgan captures the Federal garrison at Mount Sterling while also helping himself to \$18,000 from the local bank. **9 Jun:** John Morgan and his raiders are flushed by Federal troops from Mount Sterling. On the eastern front, Gen B. Butler makes yet another failed thrust towards Petersburg and is sent packing by Beauregard. **10 Jun:** The Confederate Congress authorizes military services for all men ages 17 to 50. In the west, Gen Sturgis finds Nathan Forrest at Brice's Crossroads, MS, and is completely routed by a Forrest's force that's less than half his in size. **11 Jun:** In the east, cavalry forces under CSA Gen Wade Hampton and Custer end up at Trevilian Station. Meanwhile, Gen Hunter's men in the Shenandoah Valley burn VMI. Lee dispatches Jubal Early to deal with Hunter. **12 Jun:** Grant's concealed movements fool Lee as he slips his forces towards Petersburg, VA. Meanwhile, Sheridan attacks CSA Hampton at Trevilian Station but is repulsed with heavy losses. Following this set-back, Sheridan decides not to join-up with Hunter in the Shenandoah but to return to Grant. Back in KY, Morgan is met by US Gen Burbridge at Cynthiana, KY, and defeated. Morgan loses half his troops and flees towards Abingdon, VA. **13 Jun:** Sturgis forces, having been chased by Forrest, arrive back in Memphis. Sturgis will finish the war *'awaiting orders.'* **14 Jun:** In the west, Gen Leonidas Polk is struck and killed by a Federal Parrot gun shell while attending a conference of Johnston's staff on top of Pine Mountain. **15 Jun:** Back to the eastern front, a Federal corps under W.F. (Baldy) Smith attacks Beauregard, and along with planned reinforcements by Hancock, threatens to drive Federal forces right into Petersburg. However, a late start and a decision between the two Union commanders to delay a further evening push but rather to consolidate troops and further plan operations allows the Confederate forces to pull back and reinforce Petersburg. The U.S. House of Representatives votes 95 to 66 against a joint resolution abolishing slavery. **17 Jun:** Only now does Lee recognize Grant's threat is at Petersburg—and not at Richmond. **18 Jun:** The Federal forces launch a series of uncoordinated attacks on Petersburg until Grant recognizes the opportunity to assail a weakened Confederate force has passed. Petersburg now enters a state of siege warfare. Back in the Shenandoah Valley Hunter attacks and is repelled by CSS Breckinridge and some of Early's troops. With Early moving towards him, Hunter retreats towards Parkersburg and Martinsburg, VA. **19 Jun:** The CSS Alabama under CPT Raphael Semmes finally meets its demise at the hands of CPT John Winslow and the USS Kearsarge near Cherbourg, France. Semmes and crew are rescued and proceed to neutral England. The CSS Alabama had scored 65 Federal ships during its reign of fear. **21 Jun:** Lincoln visits Grant and tours the siege lines on horseback. The next day he meets with Butler before returning to Washington. **25 Jun:** Burnside receives Grant's tepid endorsement to begin the tunneling operation that becomes infamously known as the 'Crater.' Sheridan's troops rejoin Grant. **27 Jun:** Lincoln formally accepts nomination as president. In the west, Sherman launches a major assault on Johnston's position at Kennesaw Mountain near Marietta, GA. It is a major failure and the Federals suffer over 2,000 casualties to approximately 450 by the Confederates. **30 Jun:** After numerous prior occasions on handing



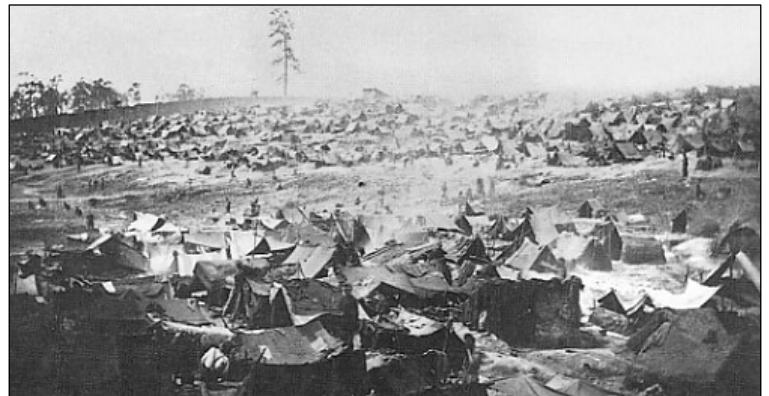


in his resignation, Salmon Chase is shocked this day when Lincoln accepts it. For information on Michigan sesquicentennial events, visit seekingmichigan.org/civil-war.

Quiz Answers:

1. The Confederates set up 163 artillery pieces that covered 2 miles for use prior to Pickett's Charge. Approximately 80 available guns were not used by the Confederates.
2. Pickett's three brigades provided 5,830 men plus 7,200 men from Pettigrew's and Trimble's six brigades resulted in 13,000 men deployed for the assault. Potential additional support totaled approximately 5,000 men. The Union 2nd Corps had approximately 8,000 men waiting for the Confederates.
3. Virginia newspapers praised Pickett's Virginia brigades for advancing the farthest during the assault but also criticized other states' troops for making little progress compared to the Virginians.
4. The 7th Michigan of the 3rd Brigade of General John Gibbon's Second Division of the 2nd Corps
5. The artillery bombardment began at 1:00 pm, with the infantry assault starting an hour later, at 2:00 pm. The assault was over by 3:00 pm.

Civil War Essentials—Civil War Prisons: Some 56,000 soldiers lost their lives in Civil War prisons—roughly 12% of Confederates and 15% of Federal soldiers incarcerated during the war died while in captivity. The causes were many but barring the few exceptions, this was not due to deliberate malfeasance on part of the captors. Initially, existing pre-war structures such as jails, fortifications and penitentiaries were used. However, given the sheer scale of captured prisoners, these pre-war structures were soon overflowing and make-shift facilities such as tents and open stockades were soon employed. In these later make-shift facilities, exposure caused by lack of shelter or inadequate clothing led to such things as pneumonia, heat stroke and mosquito borne illnesses such as malaria. These potentially deathly conditions were exacerbated by Confederate soldiers incarcerated in cold northern states and, likewise, Union soldiers in hot humid southern camps. Sanitation conditions on the whole were also completely inadequate leading to numerous life threatening illnesses such as dysentery, smallpox and cholera.



To add to these woes, prison diets were generally poor even assuming a subsistence level diet of such items as pickled beef, salt pork, corn meal, and rice or bean soup. Not included in the 'typical' diet were fruits and vegetables and this led to outbreaks of scurvy and other diseases. And for many, there simply was not enough food leading to starvation and all the other health jeopardizing illness just short of that.

As if this were all not enough, a prisoner could also find himself at risk from fellow prisoners; probably most notorious the Andersonville Raiders. And prisoners did die directly at the hands of their captors (e.g., hangings, shootings, etc.) for camp infractions, escapes or other sadistic abuses but this account for only a small percentage of the total deaths. And for an unknown number of prisoners, they simply chose to give-up in the face of their dire circumstances and either committed suicide or wasted away.

See you Monday, June 30, to hear Liz Stringer discuss "Pickett's Charge". The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. Also, check-out our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.