

Our Monday, August 28, 2017 meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the basement of the Farmington Library with our friend David Ingall speaking on “General George Armstrong Custer’s Life through the Civil War: The Forgotten Custer”. This will be a very informative and entertaining presentation on one of the great personalities of the Civil War! Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

Our trip to Shiloh and Corinth on October 21st and 22nd is FULL with a waiting list for the tour bus. You can follow the tour bus in your vehicle if you want to. The tour cost is \$120 per person. The tour cost includes the guide, bus rental and driver for the tour, Saturday picnic lunch, and a battle map booklet. Additionally, the Saturday evening banquet at Hagy’s Catfish Hotel Restaurant in Shiloh costs \$35. We will be going directly from the Shiloh battlefield to the banquet. The remainder of Saturday evening will be for rest and relaxation.

Please write your checks to our Treasurer, Jeanie Graham (the bank does not like checks made out to the Roundtable). You can write a check for \$155 to cover both the tour and dinner. If you are planning to go just on the tour, please write a check for \$120, or if you are just going to the Saturday banquet, the check will be for \$35. PAYMENT IS REQUIRED BY THE AUGUST 2017 MEETING TO HOLD YOUR SEAT. AFTER THE AUGUST MEETING NON-PAID SEATS WILL BE OPEN TO THE WAITING LIST. Jeanie’s mailing address is: 29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2326

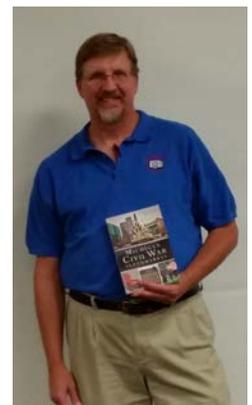
We will be taking lunch and dinner orders at the August meeting.

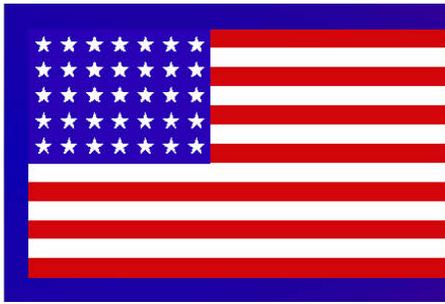
If you previously signed up for the trip but are now unable to go please notify Linda, Mollie, or Jeanie so someone from the waiting list can be put on the bus.

The hotel is the Hampton Inn Pickwick Dam at Shiloh Falls –90 Old South Road, Counce, TN. Call (731)-689-3031 to book a room and request the CWR block rate (AVAILABLE UNTIL OCT. 6). The rate is \$115/night + tax for a king room or a double bed.

The tour is The Battle of Shiloh – Saturday, October 21st and Walking Tour of Corinth’s Historical District on Sunday, October 22. A Friday night, October 20th preview will be held at the Hampton Inn at 7:30 pm. Call Linda (586.588.2712) or Mollie (313.530.8516) or Jeanie (248.225.7596) if you have any questions or need more information.

The Roundtable welcomes back long-time friend David Ingall who will speak on “General George Armstrong Custer’s Life through the Civil War: The Forgotten Custer”. General George Custer was the best-known Michigan soldier who fought in the Civil War. How General Custer progressed from last in his class at West Point in 1861 to general by June 1863 is a fascinating story. David Ingall will share with us the various events that resulted in the promotion of General Custer and his significant contributions to Union victory during the last two years of the war. David was born in Monroe, MI and presently lives in Temperance, MI. Dave’s historical interests include Michigan in the Civil War and General Custer. He has researched 25 ancestors that served in the War. He co-wrote the book, Michigan Civil War Landmarks, and wrote the booklet, Monroe’s Historic Woodland Cemetery. He is a member of several Civil War and Custer groups, including the Monroe County Civil War Roundtable and the Custer Battlefield Preservation Committee.





The Roundtable thanks everyone who participated in our Auction at the July meeting. We raised \$178 to help cover future expenses. We appreciate everyone who brought an item(s) to sell and/or bought an item(s) for their Civil War collection.

The Roundtable has received a thank you note from Jack Schultz, winner of the Jerry Maxwell History Award at North Farmington High School. *Words cannot even begin to describe how grateful and honored I am to receive the Jerry Maxwell award. Throughout all of my Social Studies classes I would hear my teachers who were lucky enough to have Mr. Maxwell in class speak of his love for his students and the way he taught. Even before that, when I first developed my love for everything historical my parents would tell me about Mr. Maxwell and how it's a shame that I'd never get to have him in class. Since my parents both had Mr. Maxwell in class they knew first-hand what a great and knowledgeable educator he was. I never really got to appreciate how great Mr. Maxwell was until I started reading the Perfect Lion and after that I realized that to be mentioned with the group of previous students and Mr. Maxwell himself was an infinitely large honor that cannot be replicated.* Jack Schultz

MRRT Minutes for July 17, 2017: Call to Order 6:40 pm, about 20 present for business meeting **Pledge** Dedicated to the 16 Marines killed in the Mississippi plane crash **Introduction of Guests and New Members** visitors Rick Castle and Rick Lampi **Treasurer's Report** Jeanie received a very nice thank you from Jack Schultz, the 2017 recipient of the Maxwell Scholarship award. Both of his parents had Jerry as a teacher. **Secretary's Report** Accepted **Preservation** Joe asks members to forward any preservation requests that they may have to him at mrrt1983@gmail.com. **Newsletters** Bob read from the Toledo Minie Bulletin and the Indianapolis Hardtack. **Website** No change **Trip Report** Discussed on Page 1 of the newsletter. **Program** our friend David Ingall will speak at the August meeting on George Custer during the Civil War. **Items of Interest** George said that free blacks had the right to vote until 1838 when it was taken away. President Trump donated his 1st Qtr. 2017 salary to the Antietam battlefield preservation. Linda said that there is a Civil War re-enactment at the Port Sanilac Historic Village on August 4th. All buildings will be open. **New Business** None **Old Business** None

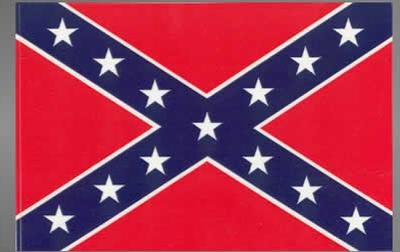
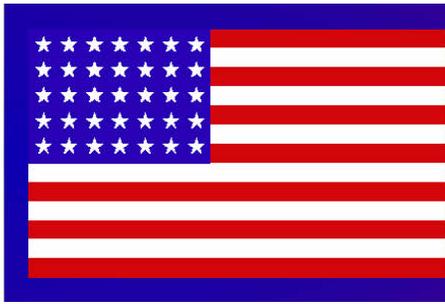
Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to General George Custer.

1. The name of General Custer's horse depicted on the Custer Statue in Monroe, MI?
2. What was the number of plebes in General Custer's class when he entered West Point?
3. Who were the other two captains promoted to brigadier general along with Custer?
4. Amazingly, Custer suffered only one wound (to his lower leg) during the Civil War. Which battle did this happen at?
5. Which battle is known as "Custer's First Last Stand"?

Civil War Essentials - The Ironclad Revolution

Just before the Civil War began, warship technology was starting to undergo the biggest change since the introduction of steam power. Crimean War experience, advances in naval cannon technology, and improved iron manufacturing, caused naval designers to consider armor protection for new warships. **Leading navies were groping for the best ironclad design and they did not always agree on what it should be.** Each nation's ironclads mission would affect the design direction chosen.

France, under Napoleon III, built the first real ironclad, the *Gloire*, in 1859. It was a wooden hulled screw steam ship with iron armor along its sides. This development raised alarm in Britain, which depended on the Royal Navy's "wooden walls" for protection of home and empire. **They responded with the *Warrior*, a true ironclad with an iron hull and**



armor. The *Warrior* (pictured below) was commissioned in 1861. **The nearest U.S. equivalent was the *New Ironsides* completed in 1862.**



All of these ships, like their wooden counterparts, were sailing vessels with auxiliary steam power used typically for maneuvering in port or in combat. **All three ships were “broadside” ironclads – like their wooden equivalents, their primary armament was arranged along each side of the ship and designed to fire at enemy ships off the vessel’s beam.** Like all broadside ships, normally only half of the guns could bear on the enemy at a time. The *Gloire* and *New Ironsides* had bluff bows and chunky silhouettes but the *Warrior* was (and is – it’s restored and on display) visually similar to mid-19th century wooden warships. All three had about 4.5” thick armor backed by thick wood. The *Warrior* and sister ship *Black Prince* lacked complete side armor – the fore & aft ends were not

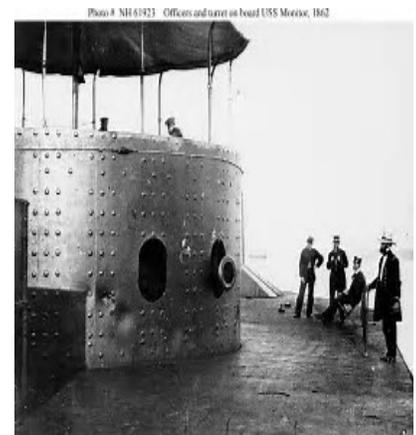
covered. This was improved for the update (*Achilles*) of this basic design.

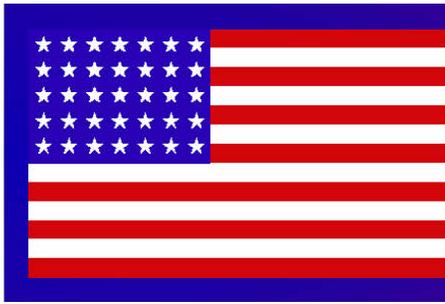
Prior to the two day battle of Hampton Roads, Va. in March 1862, Britain’s main concern was the armored threat from France, which looked to have a major ironclad shipbuilding program underway. Because *Warrior* vessels were expensive and long a-building, the Royal Navy decided to convert 5 broadside wooden warships – the *Royal Oak* class - then under construction to have iron armor. This was an expedient and left the issue of the ideal design unresolved.

The first day of the Virginia battle greatly concerned all major navies who saw the CSS *Virginia* easily defeat the wooden Union *Cumberland* and *Congress* despite their heavy armament and stubborn defense. This confirmed the end of wooden ship supremacy in major ship-to-ship combat. On the second day, John Ericsson’s odd little *Monitor* arrived to frustrate the Confederacy and further alarm the British and French. **The *Monitor* design meant any European notion of breaking the Union blockade or attacking northern ports needed a rethink.** Not only did it survive the *Virginia*’s close range fire, the *Monitor* did not have to maneuver to bring its guns to bear. Moreover, it had been built in a relatively short time. After the *Monitor/Virginia* contest became known in Europe, the bombast of the British press over the RMS *Trent* incident of late 1861 became more subdued.

On both sides of the Atlantic, experimentation was the order of the day. The Confederate ironclads were masterpieces of inspired improvisation but had major limitations and did not point the way for future warships. The U.S. Navy had faced the same dilemma as the Europeans. Even long-serving officers of the Navy’s Ironclad Board admitted to having no firm way to determine the benefits of iron armor or how ironclads should be designed.

Thus, Ericsson’s revolving turreted *Monitor* (picture right) had been only one of several Federal ironclads built in the first years of the war. The *Keokuk* was an interesting but ultimately unsuccessful design. It was steam-powered only and had a “whaleback” hull (looking like a modern submarine hull) with fore-and-aft non-revolving casements— each had a single gun which could be pivoted inside to fire out of any of 3 gun ports. Its unique armor concept proved inadequate and the *Keokuk* was so badly damaged during the April 1863 Union Navy attack on Ft. Sumter that it sank the next day. The *New Ironsides* stood up well to Confederate fire in that battle but its draft was too deep to get close to the fort. The *Galena*, another broadside ironclad, was heavily punished by enemy fire at Drewry’s Bluff in 1862, but survived – eventually most of its thin armor was removed and it served out the rest of the war as a wooden ship. **The improved monitor designs of the *Passaic* class had relocated pilot houses, at least one heavier gun (15” smoothbore guns were in**





short supply), thicker armor and a single fixed smokestack. Together with double turreted monitors, they were the principal Union ironclads used for the rest of the war.

Nonetheless, the monitor concept had serious limitations. Two heavy guns in a revolving turret worked against other ships. But at the Ft. Sumter battle, it became apparent that the broadside ships' mass firepower was superior to the Monitor's two guns against stone or masonry forts. **As important, the monitor design in the 1860's, although it would evolve into the seagoing armored warships of the future, was limited to coastal operations.** With no sails, the inefficient steam engines of the time and limited coal stowage, its range was limited. Crew living space was marginal and the machinery needed lots of maintenance. Doubts persisted about its ability to survive heavy seas. In the midst of the Civil War, the Federal Navy accepted these drawbacks because blockading the Confederate ports and defending northern ports were paramount. Later efforts, i.e., the *Dictator*, would attempt to modify the monitor idea to be more seaworthy.

The British could not simply adopt the monitor as their principal ironclad design. Although coastal and port protection against the French (or possibly the Yankees) was needed, **Britain had a far flung empire and it needed ocean-going warships to protect it.** Turrets were appealing to the British however. **Attempts were made by Cowper Coles, a Royal Navy officer with unconventional views, to combine turrets with sailing rig in order to create what was hoped to be the best of both worlds. It was not.** The masts and rigging of a sailing ship presented too many obstructions to the firing arc of centerline turrets. In addition, turrets tended to raise the center of gravity of a warship, risking instability for sailing ships that heeled over under certain wind conditions. If they were installed lower to reduce this risk, sections of the sides of the ship had to be lowered in combat to provide clearance to fire.

It would take the wide availability of steel and much improved steam engines to permit future ocean-going armored turret warships. **During the Civil War period, compromise designs had to be used by all sides.**

Quiz Answers:

1. Roanoke
2. There were 68 plebes in his class when George Custer enrolled at West Point. Eventually, George finished last among those who graduated. He became the "goat" of the class.
3. Elon Farnsworth and Wesley Merrit.
4. General Custer was wounded at the Battle of Culpepper, VA on September 13, 1863.
5. General Custer's First Last Stand was the Battle of Trevillian Station, VA on June 11th and 12th, 1864 during the Overland Campaign.

