

In November 2003 the MRRT was entertained by member Dr. Martin Brosnan as he presented “History’s Mysteries.” During the evening Marty attempted to unravel four questions: How did Lincoln’s death chair at Ford’s Theater wind up in Dearborn, Michigan? Where is John Wilkes Booth’s body? Why was Stonewall Jackson’s raincoat, worn the night he was mortally wounded, taken to Scotland? And, where is Libby Prison? All of these questions were given substantiation and insight with a bit of humor thrown in.

This month Marty Brosnan will present “Maybe *It Was Murder, Maybe It Was Something Else: History’s Mysteries, Part II.*” New questions will be posed and contemplated—what punishment, if any, should Leroy Key, General Jefferson C. Davis, Peter McCullough, and Dr. George B. Peters have received as a result of their behavior during the Civil War? Who were these men and what was it they did that might have made them guilty of murder?

Marty, a former President of the Michigan Regimental, is a retired principal from the South Lyon school district. He also gives tours of Detroit-area cemeteries. He has presented numerous talks to our group over the years, including, “Dan Sickles,” “Henry Halleck, ‘Old Brains’ of the Union Army,” and “Abraham Lincoln and the Development of the Army: December 1860-February 1862.”

Attend the meeting on **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28**, and help decide if it was “murder or was it something else.” It promises to be a fantastic, thought-provoking evening.

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If you weren’t in attendance at the September meeting, you missed a mighty special program, as *Ron Cleveland* and **Larry Jackson** teamed up to tell the fascinating story of “*The Hunley*.” A year ago Ron and Larry were given a personal tour of the **Hunley’s** remains. Their descriptions, slides, and passion for their subject made it a night to remember.

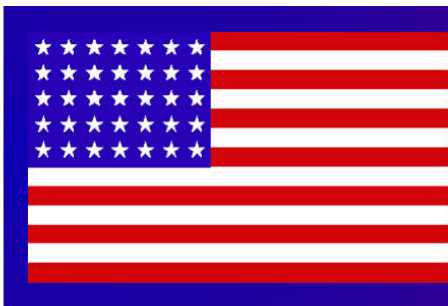
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**FALL FIELD TRIP:** Our 46 travelers—including two from South Carolina, one from Tennessee, one from Virginia, and one from West Virginia—who ventured off to Harpers Ferry and Antietam have returned. A touch of rain on Saturday (and some cold showers at the motel for a few) did not deter our “*Road Warriors*.” Honorary MRRT member Dennis Frye was again at his absolute best, providing controversial and provocative considerations especially at Antietam Battlefield. Hopefully some folks will bring photographs and stories of their trip. (Carroll’s photos from our Saturday night dinner are included in the envelopes of those who attended.)

Although it won’t be decided for a couple of months, it’s not too early to give thought on where we will be heading in the fall of 2006. Customarily, we alternate from East to West, so begin thinking of your choice in the Western Theater. (You might even contemplate a choice in the East for 2007.)

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**YEARLY DUES:** It’s time again to pay your annual MRRT dues, and the good news is they’ve remained the same bargain (\$15 for regular or \$10 for seniors and students). Simply place your check (made out to Carroll Tietz) in the envelope provided and mail it in. Couldn’t be easier.



### QUIZ: Fact or Fiction (and why?)

1. George Armstrong Custer was the youngest general in the Civil War.
2. Abraham Lincoln is rated as our greatest President in virtually all the professional Presidential Polls.
3. Robert E. Lee attained the highest grades at West Point of any graduate prior to the Civil War.
4. Fire-eater Edmund Ruffin fired the opening shot of the Civil War against Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor on April 12, 1861.
5. Barbara Frietchie, the 95-year-old resident of Frederick, Maryland, waved a Union flag at Stonewall Jackson as he rode past her house in 1862.
6. Mary Surratt was the first woman ever executed by the Federal Government.
7. Jefferson Davis was dressed in the disguise of a woman when captured by Federal forces on May 10, 1865 at Irwinville, Georgia.
8. The tallest soldier of the Civil War was Captain David Van Buskirk of the 27th Indiana Infantry who stood 6' 10 1/2" tall.
9. At the outbreak of the war, New Orleans had the largest population of any Confederate city.
10. Artillery fire caused nearly 25% of Civil War casualties.

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According to Confederate surgeon T.G. Capers, the following story is true. It was also recorded in the November 7, 1874, issue of the *American Medical Weekly*, as well as the *New York State Journal of Medicine* (Feb. 1, 1959) and *American Heritage* (Vol. XXIII, No. 1, Dec. 1971). You be the judge.....

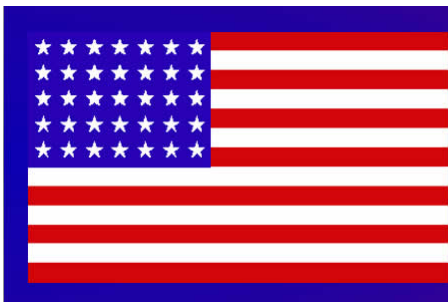
During the Battle of Raymond, Mississippi on May 12, 1863, Dr. Capers observed a fellow Rebel soldier scream with pain and fall to the ground. Hastily, the doctor made his way to the wounded man and found that a bullet had broken the upper leg bone and evidently ricocheted upward passing through his scrotum, carrying away his left testicle. The young man, although painfully wounded, would survive. Only seconds after the impact of the bullet, a 17-year-old young lady, sitting on a nearby porch with her mother, shrieked in pain and fell backward. The mother ran to the doctor pleading that he treat her wounded daughter. Dr. Capers soon examined the young lady and indeed found that her abdominal wall was punctured. The exact resting place of whatever had hit her was not ascertained, but the doctor did what he could to ease her pain. She, too, would live.

Dr. Capers stayed with his regiment in the area of Raymond for many weeks, and periodically he would check in on each patient. At one visitation, the doctor was quite astonished to find the young lady was in the advanced stage of pregnancy. Four weeks later she gave birth to a healthy 8-pound boy “to the surprise of herself and the mortification of her parents and friends.” Three weeks later Dr. Capers operated on the infant and extracted a minie ball. The doctor concluded that this was the same bullet that had carried away the testicle of the young soldier; it had then penetrated the ovary of the girl and—with some spermatozoa upon it—impregnated her.

With this conviction in mind the doctor approached the young man and told him of the circumstances. The soldier, naturally skeptical and dumbfounded, nevertheless agreed at the doctor’s insistence to an introduction with the lady. A friendship between the girl and soldier ensued, and they eventually married. The couple produced three more children over the years, none of whom resembled the father as closely as the first.

Today the bullet and a letter from Dr. Capers describing the “*miraculous bullet*” are on display in the Courthouse Museum in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

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## QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. FICTION: Custer, born on December 5, 1839, was promoted to Brigadier General on June 29, 1863, making him 23 ½. Galusha Pennypacker, born on June 1, 1844, won his promotion as a brigadier on February 18, 1865, two months shy of his 21st birthday.
2. FACT: Since the Schlesinger Polls of 1948 and 1962, as well as subsequent polls to the present, Lincoln rates as No. 1 in the Great category. He is usually followed by George Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Thomas Jefferson.
3. FICTION: Lee was actually second in his West Point class of 1829 to Charles Mason, who did not serve in the Civil War. Confederate General William Henry Chase Whiting (Class of 1845) held the record for highest grades that stood until the 1903 graduation of Douglas MacArthur.
4. FICTION: Captain George S. James, commander of the Confederate artillery at Fort Johnson, ordered Lt. Henry S. Farley to fire a 10-inch mortar as a signal for the other batteries to fire. Others began the bombardment, including Ruffin who fired a 64-pound Columbiad.
5. FICTION: Poet John Greenleaf Whittier wrote this untruth in his poem with these lines, “Shoot, if you must, this old gray head, but spare your country’s flag.” Barbara Frietchie was in her sick bed at the time, and Jackson did not traverse past her home.
6. FACT: She was hanged on July 7, 1865, along with conspirators Davy Herold, Lewis Paine, and George Atzerodt.
7. FICTION (most likely): According to Capt. James H. Parker: “I was in the party that captured Davis and saw the whole transaction from its beginning....Jefferson Davis did not have on, at the time he was taken, any garments such as are worn by women.” However, Lt. Julian Dickinson of the 4th Michigan Cavalry wrote: “Davis had on for disguise a black shawl drawn closely around his head and shoulders....[and] wore on his person a woman’s long black dress, which completely concealed his figure, excepting his spurred boot heels.”
8. FICTION: Texan Henry Thruston stood an amazing 7’ 7 ¼”.
9. FACT: Its population was 168,675. Charleston was second with 40,578. Richmond third at 37,910.
10. FICTION: Union surgeons’ reports indicate only 5% of wounds were the results of artillery, 90% were caused by bullets, and less than 4% were attributed to bayonets.

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Don’t forget to attend this month’s meeting—**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28**—for **Marty Brosnan’s** presentation of *“History’s Mysteries, Part II: Maybe It Was Murder, Maybe It Was Something Else.”* The meeting place and time remain the same: Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road) at 6:30 P.M. Show up early and get a good seat.

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