



“If ever a cool head, strong nerve and determination of character were required, it was while running through the American blockade of the coast of the Southern states.”—so wrote Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden, Captain of the blockade runner, *Don*.

Six days after the surrender of Fort Sumter, Abraham Lincoln, against the advice of Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, issued the proclamation imposing a naval blockade around the Confederacy. The U.S. Navy was given the daunting task of patrolling 3,500 miles of coastline and blockading all Southern ports. The Confederacy desperately needed to keep this vital supply line open to export cotton and import vital military supplies. As the U.S. Navy increased the number of faster new warships, it became necessary to develop even faster ships to run through the Union blockade.

Even as Southern ports were captured or cut off, more Federal vessels became available for patrolling. Additional ships, fresh from Northern shipyards, joined the picketing squadrons every month; in 1862 the U.S. Navy grew from 264 to 427 ships, then to 588 in 1863. Also in 1862, the Navy began to assign new monitors to the blockading squadrons to protect the wooden ships from Confederate ironclads.

The blockade-runners took their chances not just for money or patriotism but also for adventure and fame. For Southerners and their sympathizers, the trade assumed the proportions of an epic whose protagonists, the ship captains, possessed superhuman qualities: *“The cunning of a fox, the patience of a Job, and the bravery of a Spartan warrior,”* as a Confederate veteran put it. Unfortunately, some of the blockade-runners preferred to smuggle in luxury items rather than guns and powder. These extravagant cargoes included French Cognac, Madeira wine, Belgian silk, perfumes and cigars. Profits abounded—as much as \$425,000 for a single round trip between Wilmington and Nassau.

This month—**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29**—**Larry Hathcock**, the MRRT’s resident expert on Civil War navies, will present the stirring subject of “*Blockade Runners*.” Larry will discuss the diplomatic ramifications of the Union blockade, the development of the fast blockade runners, and the people and places involved in running the blockade. As many of you well know, Larry is a retired, award-winning schoolteacher from Holly Area Schools. He has been a member of the Michigan Regimental since 1982. Larry’s talks are always exciting and informative.

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The Michigan Regimental is proud to announce that our own Dr. Weldon Petz has been awarded the National Meritorious Service Award for his lifetime work and scholarship on Abraham Lincoln. This honor was presented by the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States. Founded by Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Philip Sheridan as well as other generals, it is the oldest military organization in the country. Forty states were represented with Weldon being the unanimous recipient of this highly prestigious award. For his work Dr. Petz was presented with a beautifully inscribed medal. Congratulations are certainly in order for Weldon.

FALL FIELD TRIP: We have returned from our trek to the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. Once again, Frank O’Reilly was at his best as our guide, and we were blessed with excellent weather. Make sure you ask the returning Road Warriors what they thought of the trip. Stories and photographs should abound!

YEARLY DUES: It’s that time of year again. January 2011 will begin our new fiscal year, and what easier way to pay up your obligations than to take the provided envelope, write a \$20 check to Carroll Tietz, put a stamp on it and simply drop it in the mail. That will take care of everything for the upcoming year.

The MRRT wishes to thank our September speakers, **Robert and Cherie Allen**, for their fine presentation, *“A ‘Guest’ of the Confederacy: The Civil War Letters and Diaries of Alonzo M. Keeler, Captain, Company B, 22nd Michigan Infantry.”*



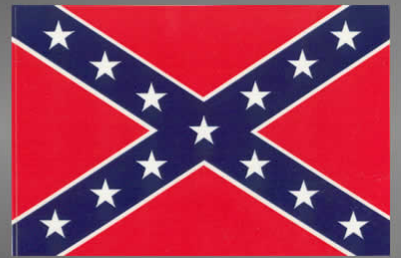
QUIZ: FEDERAL NAVAL OFFICERS

- ___1. David G. Farragut A) Attended West Point. Worked with U.S. Grant in capturing Forts Henry and Donelson, where he was struck by shell splinters. Died June 26, 1863.
- ___2. John L. Worden B) Graduate of Naval Academy in 1858. Fought at New Orleans and Mobile Bay. Greatest victory at Manila Bay in 1898 where he destroyed a Spanish fleet of 10 ships in 4 hours.
- ___3. Daniel Ammen C) Born in Tennessee. An officer at age 12. Captured New Orleans in 1862 and Mobile Bay in 1864 while strapped to the rigging of the *Hartford*.
- ___4. George Dewey D) Two of his sons fought for the Confederacy. Participated at Fort Donelson, Natchez, Vicksburg, and Port Hudson. Died of heart disease on May 1, 1864.
- ___5. David Dixon Porter E) Ohio native who personally raised the U.S. flag over Fort Beauregard. Commanded the monitor *Patapsco*. Suppressed a mutiny aboard the *Ocean Queen* by personally shooting two of the ringleaders.
- ___6. Samuel F. Du Pont F) His more famous brother was an artillerist killed at Gettysburg. His most dangerous assignment was leading the attack on the powerful Confederate ram *Albemarle*.
- ___7. Andrew H. Foote G) A devout abolitionist and critic of the Lincoln Administration. Commanded the *Kearsarge* which sank the *C.S.S. Alabama* off the coast of France.
- ___8. William B. Cushing H) Named by Gideon Welles to head the Blockade Strategy Board. Led a squadron of monitors against Charleston. Became outspoken against monitors, and was censured by Welles.
- ___9. John A. Winslow I) Commanded the *Powhatan*, captured Forts Jackson and St. Philip, and was involved with taking Vicksburg. Immediately after the war became superintendent of Naval Academy.
- ___10. William D. Porter J) Commanded the *Monitor*, which fought the *C.S.S. Virginia* to a standstill at Hampton Roads. He was partially blinded during the conflict.

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Uninvited and unannounced, the frigate **Oслиaba**, flying the ensign of Czar Alexander II’s Imperial Russian Navy, sailed into New York Harbor on September 11, 1863. In the next three weeks, the **Oслиaba** was joined by five other Russian warships. Among them was the 51-gun frigate **Alexander Nevski**, flagship of the Atlantic Fleet commander, Rear Admiral Stephan S. Lisovski, who had once been rescued by a U.S. warship after his vessel foundered in a tidal wave off Japan. Northerners rejoiced at the unexpected visit. It seemed to them that the Russian fleet might support the U.S. Navy if the powerful British and French fleets intervened to aid the Confederacy. It was, however, the Czar’s fear of war with England and France, not his sympathy for the Union cause, which prompted him to send his fleet to safety in New York City. No matter, the North lionized the Russians, opening with a grand review of the Russian fleet in the Hudson River. An American band aboard the steamer **Andrews** began playing “*God Save the Emperor*,” which was followed by a band from the **Alexander Nevski** playing “*Yankee Doodle*.”

Escorted by police and cavalrymen, officers of the Russian fleet rode carriages down Broadway to an exuberant welcome from thousands of New Yorkers. The Russians, overcome by the reception, shouted their thanks and doffed their gold-laced hats to the cheering crowds. After two cold and dreary months at sea, the Russians plunged eagerly into the pleasures of city life. They went sightseeing, sat endlessly for photographs, and patronized restaurants, saloons and



brothels. “*An extra quantity of wine,*” confessed a midshipman, “*came somehow to be consumed rather often.*” The officers were repeatedly entertained at lavish functions. The most elaborate affair was held at the New York Academy of Music. Hundreds of guests feasted on 12,000 oysters, 1000 pounds of tenderloin, 360 pounds of salmon and 250 turkeys—all of it washed down with 3,500 bottles of wine and champagne. In the academy’s ballroom, bejeweled socialites in voluminous gowns vied to waltz and polka with the Czar’s men. But the results were somewhat disappointing to the dancers. Most of the Russians were shorter than the women had expected and, reported the **New York Herald**, [the Russians] disappeared “*in the embrace of grand nebulous masses of muslin and crinoline, whirled hither and thither as if in terrible torment.*” The ball and banquet reportedly cost one million dollars, and many Northerners questioned the propriety of such a gala while Union soldiers were starving and dying in prison camps. But the Russian sailors were treated to sightseeing ventures, including Niagara Falls, where American guides escorted them free of charge.

From New York, the Russians sailed up and down the East Coast, seeing and being seen in a dozen cities. In Boston, the crew members paraded on Boston Common. In Washington, D.C., President Abraham Lincoln entertained the Russians at a White House reception. The grand tour finally ended in April of 1864 when the Czar, no longer worried about a war with England and France, sent his fleet on other missions. By then, the possibility of European intervention on the Confederate side had also passed. But Northerners were nonetheless grateful for the morale-building visit of their newfound allies from the East. Speaking for his countrymen, U.S. Navy Secretary Gideon Welles declared, “*God Bless the Russians.*”

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. David G. Farragut—C
2. John L. Worden—J
3. Daniel Ammen—E
4. George Dewey—B
5. David Dixon Porter—I
6. Samuel F. Du Pont—H
7. Andrew H. Foote—A
8. William B. Cushing—F
9. John A. Winslow—G
10. William D. Porter—D

A final reminder of this month’s meeting—**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29**—at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road) where you’ll be entertained by **Larry Hathcock** with his presentation of “*Blockade Runners.*” The meeting will begin at 6:30 P.M. Come help us celebrate the final meeting of our 50th year.

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