MICHIGAN REGIMENTAL CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
MRRT 1861 1865
A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION INTENDED TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD
NEWSLETTER

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2026, ROUNDTABLE MEETING
Our September 2026 meeting will be on Monday, September 28, 2026, at 6:30 pm at the lower level of the Farmington Library, on the corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. Our guest speaker, Dave Ingall, will provide a unique prospective on "*The 150th anniversary of Custer's Last Stand".*

OUR 2026 FIELD TRIP – DESTINATION: WINCHESTER, VA
Our trip will be on the weekend of October 17th and 18th, We are expecting twenty-four participants. **We may still sign up for the trip.** You may call Linda at 586.588.2172 or e-mail her at lindagerhardt99@gmail.com. .

Tour Cost
$320 per person, based on twenty-four participants. Please write your check out to Jim Burroughs (the bank does not like checks made out to the MRRT). Jim's mailing address is: 1632 North Silvery Lane, Dearborn, MI 48128-1081. We may also bring our checks to the meeting. This includes the tour guide fee and tip, and motor coach transportation around the Winchester area. The fee also includes Saturday buffet lunch north of Winchester, Saturday evening banquet in the historic district of Winchester and Sunday sit-down lunch at the Edinburgh Mill near Strasburg, VA. Also, water and snacks on the bus.

Tour Guide: Scott Patchen, who has served as our guide on previous trips. **Tour Dates:** October 17–18. **Hotel:** Hampton Inn – Winchester. A block of rooms will be available for $139 per night. To reserve, call 540.678.4000. The Hampton Inn is located at 1204 Berryville Avenue, Winchester. Rooms are reserved under MRRT 2026 Tour. Hot breakfast each morning. **Tour Bus:** Varsity Travel-Winchester.

Itinerary: Saturday – 1862 Stonewall Jackson-Sandy Ridge 1864 Jubal Early-Prichard Farm and Third Battle of Winchester
Sunday – Fisher's Hill Battlefield, Cedar Creek Battlefield, Frederick County Courthouse Museum – Winchester

Please note that each participant must provide his/her own transportation to and from Winchester, Virginia.

ROUNDTABLE WEBSITE The Roundtable has a great website, well-managed by our friend, Gerald Furi. The website is: *https://www.mrrt.us*

September 2026 Speaker – Dave Ingall, will share with us the story of the "*150th Anniversary of George Custer's Last Stand".* Dave will discuss in a laid-back manner the big event in Montana. He and his son Austin, now a freshman at the University of Michigan, were probably the only Michigan residents there. The event and subsequent symposium were memorable.
Dave will share some interesting information that he found. Also, a 7th Cavalry soldier remains was discovered in 2022. Dave will share pictures of the discovered artifacts. There will be many interesting items.
He has spoken to our group several times on topics beyond George Custer, including Civil War sites in Mississippi and Kentucky before our field trips to those states. David and Karin Risko authored a book, Glory, Valor, and Sacrifice: Michigan Sites Significant to the Civil War.

This will be a great presentation!

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August 2026, Speaker – Dr. Steven Ramold, PhD, "*It is all hardship and trouble: Discipline and ill-discipline in the Confederate Army.*"

Steven said that he is half-way through his latest book, on **tonight's topic of Confederate discipline and ill-discipline. The question to be pondered was, Did the Soldiers let the Confederacy Down or did the Confederacy let the Soldiers down?**

The Confederate government did not make their men effective. Good leadership was required to take diligent care of the soldiers' families back home. The Confederacy failed for several reasons:

- **The soldiers were not paid on time.** The western armies did not receive their pay for a year and a half. During the war, inflation was out of control at 9000%. Economic management was extremely poor.
- **Feed the soldiers properly.** The soldiers complained about both the quantity and quality of the food that they received. Being hungry reduced the desire to fight. The Confederacy had an extremely poor railroad system which resulted in major distribution and preparation concerns. Fodder for the animals was also a major issue. The Confederates tried to replace fresh bread with hard tack. By 1865, it cost the Confederates $1 million a day to feed a rapidly depleting army.
- **Furloughs to visit home.** Receiving furloughs to go home were difficult to receive because the Confederate armies were significantly outnumbered. Food and families were especially important to the soldiers. The lack of transport made furloughs longer. Once the soldier was home the strong temptation was to stay home and not go back to the army. This situation was never resolved.

Unpaid soldiers sought other ways to make up for their lack of pay. They received food from home, and applejack was plentiful.

Sometimes they would happily receive extra refreshments from the Confederate Army for the holiday seasons. Eggnog was passed out during the 1862 holidays while whiskey was handed out for Christmas 1863. There was not much available for the 1864 holidays.

Soldiers commonly stole supplies from commissary stores. Foraging and pillaging became routine and indistinguishable. A soldier might claim to have "found" a pig that he had taken from a family. Confederate troops foraged more extensively than Union forces, harming their own countryside.

The Army institutionalized foraging in 1863. Even so, there were no regulations and no controls.

Desertions. During the war there were 104,000 desertions from the Army of Northern Viriginia, which was one out of seven soldiers. Desertions became an epidemic late in the war as the family home situation declined. Afte the Battle of Gettysburg, there was a crackdown on the numerous deserters.

Courts-Martial Regimental courts-martial imposed less severe penalties than general courts-martial. Juries heard cases, defendants could have legal representation, and an appeals process was available. An officer could be cashiered, permanently barred from serving as an officer, or reduced to the rank of private. Punishments did not include imprisonment or physical penalties. Two officers and a chaplain were convicted of espionage and executed.

Privates faced extra duty and humiliating punishments. For example, they may have to carry a heavy log around the camp. The private might have to carry a sign THIEF. A soldier might be bound and gagged for ten hours. Flogging and branding were also used.

The privates never received a dishonorable discharge; men were needed to fight.

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Death Sentences – The Confederates sentenced 1,300 men to death, only 229 died. President Davis gave numerous pardons. Execution was the normal punishment for murder, rape, and bounty-jumping. Bounty-jumping was more of a problem in the Union Army because the North had more money to spend.

We thank Dr. Ramold for his excellent presentation.

Civil War Essentials - War Profiteers

The Pre-War U.S Army

The transition the U.S. government was compelled to make in the early days of the Civil War was staggering. A military establishment consistent with the prewar situation – peaceful except for occasional conflict with Native Americans along the frontier –**was woefully inadequate to fight even the short war with the Confederacy which most everyone envisioned in the beginning**.

The prewar regular Army numbered only 15-16,000 officers and men and the Navy had only about ninety ships most of which were not ready for immediate use. The Federal government had extremely limited revenue sources prior to the war, primarily tariffs on imports and the sale of public land. **The result was a cost-conscious attitude [Imagine that!!!] regarding expenditures including for the military.**

Coastal forts built in the 1820s and 1830s in response to British incursions during the War of 1812 had deteriorated, naval ships were laid up, and arsenals held few usable weapons. Before the war, many officers had also resigned to pursue more rewarding civilian careers.

Equipping the huge expansion of the U.S. Military When the War Started



When Congress provided for the wartime expansion of state militias and creation of volunteer regiments, there was a rush by the states and the Federal government to equip this influx of soldiers with weapons, uniforms, and other equipment. **Purchasing agents from the several states and from Washington (and in Europe, Confederate agents as well) vied for available weapons, etc., resulting in something close to a frenzied auction.**

Sellers Commanded High Prices for Inferior Weapons

Because of the spiraling demand, the sellers could command soaring prices, often for inferior or even unsafe goods such as the .69 caliber "Ponder" rifle or the ancient .72 caliber Prussian musket. Manufacturers and speculators were afforded a fantastic opportunity to negotiate deals, generating huge profits. The Federal government, which would foot the bill for all such contracts, became alarmed.

Famed Explorer John C. Fremont Ineptly Commanded the U.S. Dept. of the West.

One area which epitomized the issue was the newly created Dept. of the West which had been given to John C. Fremont (photo), a soldier and well-known explorer of the far west before the war.

Fremont, in an effort to obtain needed weapons and equipment for troops to counter the Confederate threat to Missouri, **had entered into a number of contracts which proved to be outrageously profitable to the vendors – his**

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departmental Quartermaster General, a major named McKinstry, was only too happy to give "sweetheart" contracts to those who rendered him political favors or payoffs. Reports of these scandalous transactions soon got back to Congress and Fremont, although extremely popular with the public because of his prewar exploits, was dismissed after only about one hundred days as department head. President Lincoln ordered a stop to all payments from Fremont's period pending an investigation of the allegations of excessive profits.

The Fraudulent Case of Shipbuilder Theodore Adams

Secretary of War Simon Cameron appointed a Board of Commissioners of three senior officials to examine all unsettled claims. **One case which they reviewed will illustrate the issues they found**.

Theodore Adams, a ship builder, contracted with McKinstry to build thirty-eight mortar boats and eight tugboats for Fremont. After partial payments were already received prior to Lincoln's suspension order, Adams claimed to still be owed about $209,000 for the vessels.

The Board examined the contracts and the amounts already paid and **concluded that the government owed Adams only $96,200 more with the remaining $112,800 representing excessive and fraudulent profits.** This reduced amount was offered to Adams if he agreed that he had been paid *in full*. Adams signed the receipt but noted on it that his signature was "under protest." Major McKinstry was dismissed as quartermaster general and then dishonorably discharged for his cupidity in this and other transactions.

Adams received his reduced final payment, but he continued to believe he was owed the disallowed amount and sued the government to recover it. His position was upheld by the Court of Claims, but the U.S. Attorney General filed an appeal to the Supreme Court which heard the case in March 1869. **The high court found for the government in this case**.

Five other Fremont-era cases with similar circumstances were also decided based directly on the Adams case ruling. The court's opinion may have been motivated partly to protect the government from a host of further lawsuits rather than solely the specifics of these cases.

Confederate General Braxton Bragg,

I cannot, for the life of me, figure out how Gen. Braxton Bragg rose to such prominence in the Confederate Army. From all I have heard, he lost every battle he fought, didn't he?

Well, sonny, **it is no secret that old Bragg was no favorite either among his officers or his men. He spent a lot of time and energy fighting with his under generals and I hear he was hell-on-discipline with his troops. But when you see how close he came to routing our Western armies in at least two or three battles, you know he was a fighting man's general**.

Let me tell you about a couple of close calls we had with old Break. Of course, you know he had an infantry corps at Shiloh when they nearly pushed us into the Tennessee River. At another river, Stones River, he had Old Rosey's army hanging on by his fingernails and one more push might have won the day.

Another narrow escape came in September 1863. Old Rosie had us scattered across the mountain gaps of North Georgia in pursuit of Bragg's army—exactly what Bragg wanted. He managed to trap an entire Federal division, Negley's, near Dug Gap between two Southern divisions. We thank the Colonel, Tom Nanzig of Ann Arbor.