

Vol LXVI, #6

Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

June 2026

MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2026, ROUNDTABLE MEETING

Our June 2026 meeting will be on Monday, June 29, 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, Jim Epperson from Ann Arbor, will share with us Part 2 of the story of Union General Lew Wallace.

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, 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 before. **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. **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, created by our friend, Gerald Furi. We are no longer connected to the Farmington Library. The website is: <https://www.mrrt.us>

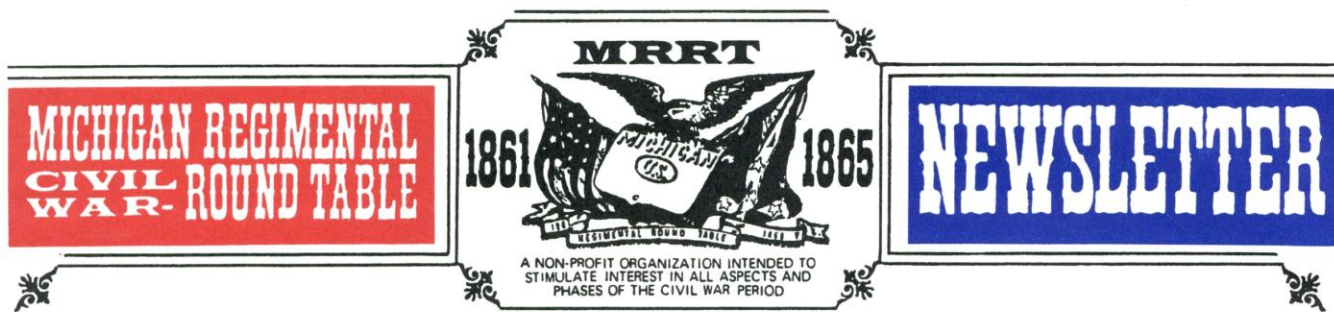
JUNE 29, 2026, SPEAKER – JIM EPPERSON – ANN ARBOR, MI

Jim Epperson will present Part 2 of the story of Union General Lew Wallace, focusing on the period after the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862. After the Battle of Shiloh, General Wallace organized Cincinnati's defenses against General Bragg's 1862 invasion of Kentucky. During Confederate General Jubal Early's 1864 invasion of the North, he commanded the Union Army in the Battle of Monocacy.

Jim became interested in the Civil War with *The American Heritage Illustrated History of the Civil War*.

He is active with the Ann Arbor Civil War Roundtable. He is a retired mathematician with a PhD from Case Western Reserve.

This will be an outstanding presentation on Monday evening, June 29, 2026!



May 2026 Speaker – Dr. Roger Rosentreter, PhD

The MRRT was entertained at the May meeting by Professor Roger Rosentreter's presentation of "*Hoofs & Paws – How Four Legged "Soldiers" Impacted the War.*" Roger commented at the beginning that he had spent "a lot of time" on this subject because of its importance and that it has received limited attention in the past.

First Casualty of the War was a horse.

The first casualty of the Civil War at Fort Sumter was a horse, not a man. It was the first of **about 1.5 million horses and mules killed during the war**. That figure, huge as it, is even more impressive considering that it is about double the number of humans killed in the conflict. Also, it means that half of the three million horses and mules used in the war died.

These animals came from the quiet of small farms or towns and were plunged into the strange and terrifying world of a military quadruped. Roger said that his mother had given him a fiction book about R. E. Lee's famous horse, *Traveler*, which the author wrote as a stream-of-consciousness experience of the horse! He said although he still has and treasures the book as her gift, he has never cared to read more than the first page!



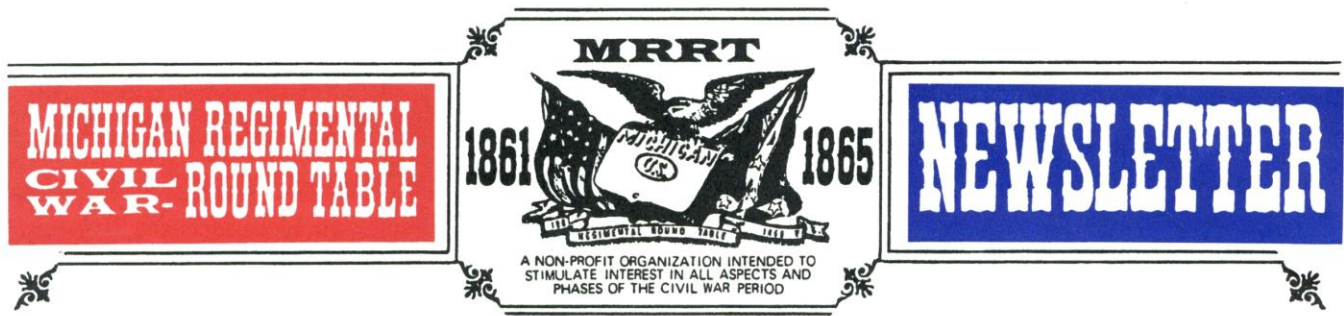
Value of horses during the war

Both sides recognized the value of horses and mules from the beginning of the war. **The Union did not initially view cavalry as central to its strategy, but that changed over time. At first, cavalrymen on both sides had to provide their own horses; the Union soon began supplying mounts, while Confederate troopers continued to furnish their own.** A horse cost the Federal government about \$125 early in the war, and that price had doubled by 1865. Horses, mules, and their upkeep accounted for 75% of the Federal Quartermaster Department's total costs. Each horse was expected to receive twelve pounds of oats and fourteen pounds of hay per day, and the average Union cavalryman went through four horses each year. Soldiers on both sides who lost their horses had to march on foot until they could obtain

replacements.

Union Army Horse Regulations

Union regulations called for cavalry horses to have dark colors coats only. No mares were used. High-strung animals were avoided. Horses were found to be trainable; they could learn oral commands and bugle calls and respond to them even during a terrible battle. **The most challenge a horse could have was to be an artillery horse.** The harnesses and the gait were different than for wagon horses and they had to endure the loud roar of the guns. Mules were used exclusively for pulling supply wagons as they were considered unsuited for combat. **Conversely, mules were able to bring out the most colorful language from their handlers!**



Horse casualties at the Battle of Gettysburg

At Gettysburg, the Union employed about forty-three thousand horses and mules, the Confederates about twenty-nine thousand. Around 3 to 5 thousand were killed in that battle. When a horse was killed, particularly by artillery fire, the result was especially messy. Unlike human remains, the remains of animals were burned, not buried.

Famous horses of the war

Roger discussed several of the horses made famous by their famous riders. *Cincinnati* was the favorite horse of U. S. Grant, who despite not displaying the dashing figure of a JEB Stuart, is considered the best natural horseman among the leaders in the Civil War. Even more famous than *Cincinnati* was *Traveler*, Lee's favorite horse. Others included *Little Sorrel*, Stonewall Jackson's horse and *Rienzi* which carried Phil Sheridan back to rally his army to victory at Cedar Creek in 1864. Several of these horses became the objects of morbid curiosity after the war when their remains were displayed – either preserved intact by taxidermists or in the case of *Traveler* as a skeleton!

Dogs during the war

Dr. Rosentreter discussed the role of pets, principally dogs, in the war. Many were adopted as mascots by regiments on both sides; some were pets of individuals. Several displayed evident courage in battle but most were simply objects of affection for lonely soldiers.

A statue of an exhausted, broken-down cavalry horse at Fort Riley, Kansas, captures the suffering shared by millions of animals and their human companions during the war (picture on Page 2).

We thank Roger for his outstanding presentation.

Civil War Essentials – John B. Floyd – Alleged Crook, Incompetent Confederate General

John B. Floyd was born in Virginia, son of John, governor of Virginia from 1830-1834. John B. became a lawyer in Virginia. He was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 1847-1849. John B. was then elected governor of Virginia in 1849. President Buchanan selected him as Secretary of War from 1857-1860. John B. lost a large fortune and his health in a cotton-planting venture in Arkansas.

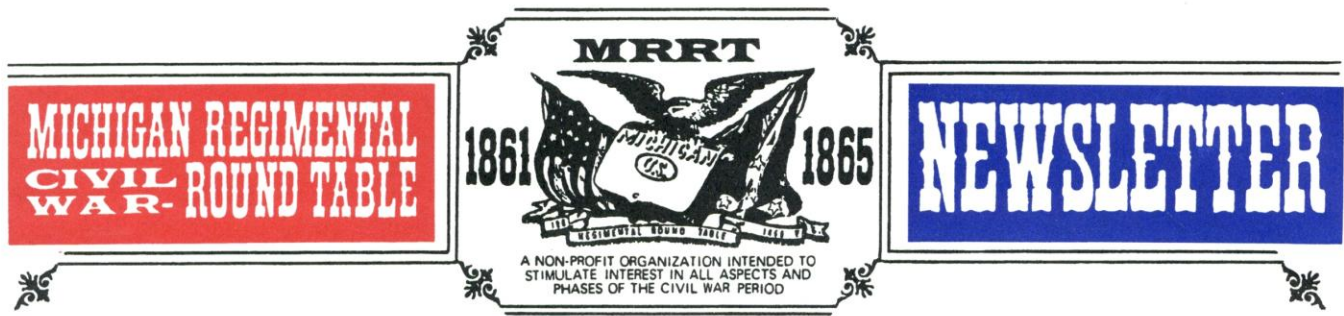


Russell, Majors, and Waddell Scandal – late 1850's

The War Department had extensive dealings with the western transportation firm Russell, Majors, and Waddell, which had provided supplies and transportation but had not been paid. After the Panic of 1857, the firm faced bankruptcy. To stay afloat, it persuaded Floyd (picture left) to issue signed acceptances in advance, indicating amounts that were already due or soon would be owed by the government. Although these acceptances had limited value, the firm discounted them at the banks.

During the summer of 1860 this no longer worked. So, his wife's nephew, Godard Bailey, who worked in the Interior Department gave the firm \$870,000 of bonds belonging to an Indian Trust Fund, receiving Floyd's signed acceptances in return.

This activity was illegal. To be fair, Floyd did not profit one penny from this affair. The affair became public knowledge about the time the crisis over the Charleston forts was becoming heated.



Ordnance scandal – 1860

Secretary Floyd supervised some loose transactions with the sale or transfer to the Southern states of surplus Federal ordnance supplies. Allegedly, he bent over backwards to give weapons to states that were ready to secede from the Union. One major case was the transfer of weapons from Pittsburgh to the Gulf Coast.

Secretary Floyd told an ordnance captain to ship substantial armaments to Galveston, Texas and Ship Island, Mississippi. These weapons included 110 Columbiads and eleven 32-pounders. The steamboat *Silver Wave* was ready to take the weapons down the Mississippi at the end of December 1860. The citizens protested when they learned about this. The shipment was then cancelled by Secretary Holt, Floyd's very recent replacement. An investigation revealed that the amount of help provided to Southern states was exaggerated and primarily due to his slipshod administration.

Battle of Fort Donelson -1862

John became a brigadier general in the Confederate Army. He was one of three generals commanding the Confederate forces during the debacle at Fort Donelson. They held off General Grant's Army for two days. To avoid surrender he and his Virginia soldiers fled by steamboat during the middle of the night.

General Gideon Pillow, another ineffective commander, also fled during the night. The next day, General Buckner was forced to surrender to General Grant; Buckner and Grant had been friends before the war.

General Floyd was relieved of command one month later.

Union General Benjamin Butler – from the Colonel (We thank Tom Nanzig from Ann Arbor)

Colonel, I have been reading about General Benjamin Butler. Was he as ineffective as he seemed? Ben There—Did not Do That!

Well, Gen. Butler was certainly no great success. He mishandled every battle he participated in, from Big Bethel in 1861 to his mismanaged Fort Fisher campaign in 1864. Still, he was not a failure at everything he attempted.

For instance, he started a spying operation in the Richmond, Virginia, area and managed to put two spies, a cook and a gardener, right in President Jefferson Davis's house!

Old Ben used signal Corps troops all along his lines in Richmond and Petersburg later to keep an eye on Confederate activity.

And even though some thought of him as a bit of a crank, the crank that ordered those Gatling guns was no joke to the men who faced those fast-shooting weapons.

He was real concern was for the health of the fort-slogging soldiers. He had one of the best medical departments in the war and his chief of nurses was none other than Clara Barton.

He also saw that the mail system got letters to the soldiers. No, he was not the best military man by a long shot, but he was not all bad, either. Like many of us, he had his vices and he had his virtues.