Official Newsletter of the Michigan Company of Military Historians & Collectors

July 9, 2012

"*Don't talk to me about naval tradition. It's nothing but rum, sodomy, and the lash."*
Attributed to Winston Churchill responding to an admiral who stated that combined operations would be against Naval Tradition.

July Speaker

Chuck Pfarrer, former Navy SEAL, Open Mess Speaker, screenwriter and author will address the Company about his alternative account of the death of Osama bin Laden. He has written a book about this topic and hopefully will bring copies to sign.

MEETINGS *take place the second Monday of every month at the* ***Radisson Hotel Grand Rapids Riverfront*** *270 Ann St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (616) 363-9001. Socializing begins at 6:00 (1800), dinner at 7:00 (1900), business meeting 7:15 (1915), and program at 8:00 (2000).*

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Company Notes

✦ Fern O'Beshaw has requested consideration for associate membership into the Company. We will vote on her application at this months meeting.

✦Former member Tom Sutter has sent an item that the membership may find informing. The political references made do not reflect any basis in fact held by the MCMH&C; however the quotes and attributes without the pictorials are worthy of our contemplation. I will send the document in an additional email titled "Sutter"

✦Spoke with former member John Reeves whose health is improving and hopefully he will join the Company in the near future.

Tibits: War of 1812

1. The War Needs Re-Branding

"The War of 1812" is an easy handle for students who struggle with dates. But the name is a misnomer that makes the conflict sound like a mere wisp of a war that began and ended the same year. In reality, it lasted 32 months following the U.S. declaration of war on Britain in June 1812. That's longer than the Mexican-American War, Spanish-American War, and U.S. involvement in World War I. Also confusing is the Battle of New Orleans, the largest of the war and a resounding U.S. victory. The battle occurred in January, 1815—two weeks after U.S. and British envoys signed a peace treaty in Ghent, Belgium. News traveled slowly then. Even so, it's technically incorrect to say that the Battle of New Orleans was fought after the war, which didn't officially end until February 16, 1815, when the Senate and President James Madison ratified the peace treaty. For roughly a century, the conflict didn't merit so much as a capital W in its name and was often called "the war of 1812." The British were even more dismissive. They termed it "the American War of 1812," to distinguish the conflict from the much great Napoleonic War in progress at the same time. The War of 1812 may never merit a Tchaikovsky overture, but perhaps a new name would help rescue it from obscurity.

2. Impressment May Have Been a Trumped-Up Charge

One of the strongest impetuses for declaring war against Great Britain was the impressment of American seamen into the Royal Navy, a not uncommon act among navies at the time but one that incensed Americans nonetheless. President James Madison's State Department reported that 6,257 Americans were pressed into service from 1807 through 1812. But how big a threat was impressment, really? "The number of cases which are alleged to have occurred, is both extremely erroneous and exaggerated," wrote Massachusetts Sen. James Lloyd, a Federalist and political rival of Madison's. Lloyd argued that the president's allies used impressment as "a theme of party clamour [sic], and party odium," and that those citing as a *casus belli* were "those who have the least knowledge and the smallest interest in the subject." Other New England leaders, especially those with ties to the shipping industry, also doubted the severity of the problem. Timothy Pickering, the Bay State's other senator, commissioned a study that counted the total number of impressed seamen from Massachusetts at slightly more than 100 and the total number of Americans at just a few hundred. Yet the Britons' support for Native Americans in conflicts with the United States, as well as their own designs on the North American frontier, pushed Southern and Western senators toward war, and they needed more support to declare it. An issue that could place the young nation as the aggrieved party could help; of the 19 senators who passed the declaration of war, only three were from New England and none of them were Federalists.

3. The Rockets Really Did Have Red Glare

Francis Scott Key famously saw the American flag flying over Fort McHenry amid the "rockets' red glare" and "bombs bursting in air." He wasn't being metaphoric. The rockets were British missiles called Congreves and looked a bit like giant bottle rockets. Imagine a long stick that spins around in the air, attached to a cylindrical canister filled with gunpowder, tar and shrapnel. Congreves were inaccurate but intimidating, an 1814 version of "shock and awe." The "bombs bursting in air" were 200 pound cannonballs, designed to explode above their target. The British fired about 1500 bombs and

rockets at Fort McHenry from ships in Baltimore Harbor and only succeeded in killing four of the fort's defenders.

4. Uncle Sam Came From the War Effort

The Star-Spangled Banner isn't the only patriotic icon that dates to the War of 1812. It's believed that "Uncle Sam" does, too. In Troy, New York, a military supplier named Sam Wilson packed meat rations in barrels labeled U.S. According to local lore, a soldier was told the initials stood for "Uncle Sam" Wilson, who was feeding the army. The name endured as shorthand for the U.S. government. However, the image of Uncle Sam as a white-bearded recruiter didn't appear for another century, during World War I.

5. The Burning of Washington was Capital Payback

To Americans, the burning of Washington by British troops was a shocking act by barbaric invaders. But the burning was payback for a similar torching by American forces the year before. After defeating British troops at York (today's Toronto), then the capital of Upper Canada, U.S. soldiers plundered the town and burned its parliament. The British exacted revenge in Aug. 1814 when they burned the White House, Congress, and other buildings. Long-term, this may have been a blessing for the U.S. capital. The combustible "President's House" (as it was then known) was rebuilt in sturdier form, with elegant furnishings and white paint replacing the earlier whitewash. The books burned at Congress's library were replaced by Thomas Jefferson, whose wide-ranging collection became the foundation for today's comprehensive Library of Congress.

6. Native Americans Were the War's Biggest Losers

The United States declared war over what it saw as British violations of American sovereignty at sea. But the war resulted in a tremendous loss of Native American sovereignty, on land. Much of the combat occurred along the frontier, where Andrew Jackson battled Creeks in the South and William Henry Harrison fought Indians allied with the British in the "Old Northwest." This culminated in the killing of the Shawnee warrior, Tecumseh, who had led pan-Indian resistance to American expansion. His death, other losses during the war, and Britain's abandonment of their native allies after it, destroyed Indians' defense of their lands east of the Mississippi, opening the way for waves of American settlers and "Indian Removal" to the west.

7. The Ill-Fated General Custer Had His Start in the War

In 1813, by the River Raisin in Michigan, the British and their Native American allies dealt the U.S. its most stinging defeat in the War of 1812, and the battle was followed by an Indian attack on wounded prisoners. This incident sparked an American battle cry, "Remember the Raisin!" William Henry Harrison, who later led the U.S. to victory in battle against the British and Indians, is remembered on his tomb as "Avenger of the Massacre of the River Raisin." George Armstrong Custer remembered the Raisin, too. He spent much of his youth in Monroe, the city that grew up along the Raisin, and in 1871, he was photographed with War of 1812 veterans beside a monument to Americans slaughtered during and after the battle. Five years later, Custer also died fighting Indians, in one of the most lopsided defeats for U.S. forces since the River Raisin battle 63 years before.

8. There Was Almost a United States of New England

The political tension persisted as the war progressed, culminating with the Hartford Convention,

a meeting of New England dissidents who seriously flirted with the idea of seceding from the United States. They rarely used the terms "secession" or "disunion," however, as they viewed it as merely a separation of two sovereign states. For much of the preceding 15 years, Federalist plans for disunion ebbed and flowed with their party's political fortunes. After their rival Thomas Jefferson won the presidency in 1800, they grumbled sporadically about seceding, but mostly when Jefferson took actions they didn't appreciate (and, worse, when the electorate agreed with him). The Louisiana Purchase, they protested, was unconstitutional; the Embargo Act of 1807, they said, devastated the New England shipping industry. Electoral victories in 1808 silenced chatter of disunion, but the War of 1812 reignited those passions. Led by Senator Thomas Pickering, disaffected politicians sent delegates to Hartford in 1814 as the first step in a series to sever ties with the United States. "I do not believe in the practicality of a long-continual union," wrote Pickering to convention chairman George Cabot. The North and South's "mutual wants would render a friendly and commercial intercourse inevitable." Cabot and other moderates in the party, however, quashed the secessionist sentiment. Their dissatisfaction with "Mr. Madison's War," they believed, was merely a consequence of belonging to a federation of states. Cabot wrote back to Pickering: "I greatly fear that a separation would be no remedy *because the source of them is in the political theories of our country and in ourselves*.... I hold democracy in its natural operation to be *the government of the worst.*

9. Canadians Know More About the War Than You Do

Few Americans celebrate the War of 1812, or recall the fact that the U.S. invaded its northern neighbor three times in the course of the conflict. But the same isn't true in Canada, where memory of the war and pride in its outcome runs deep. In 1812, American "War Hawks" believed the conquest of what is today Ontario would be easy, and that settlers in the British-held territory would gladly become part of the U.S. But each of the American invasions was repelled. Canadians regard the war as a heroic defense against their much larger neighbor, and a formative moment in their country's emergence as an independent nation. While the War of 1812 bicentennial is a muted affair in the U.S., Canada is reveling in the anniversary and celebrating heroes such as Isaac Brock and Laura Secord, little known south of the border. "Every time Canada beats the Americans in hockey, everybody's tremendously pleased," says Canadian historian Allan Greer. "It's like the big brother, you have to savor your few victories over him and this was one."

10. **The Last Veteran**

Amazingly, some Americans living today were born when the last veteran of the War of 1812 was still alive. In 1905, a grand parade was held to celebrate the life of Hiram Silas Cronk, who died on April 29, two weeks after his 105th birthday. Cronk "cast his first vote for Andrew Jackson and his last for Grover Cleveland," according to a newspaper account from 1901. After nearly a century of obscurity as a farmer in New York State, he became something of a celebrity the closer he came to dying. Stories about his life filled newspaper columns, and the New York City Board of Aldermen began planning Cronk's funeral months before he died. When he did, they marked the event with due ceremony. "As the funeral cortege moved from the Grand Central Station to the City Hall it afforded an imposing and unusual spectacle," reported the *Evening Press* of Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Led by a police escort of mounted officers, a detachment from the United States regular Army, the Society of 1812 and the Old Guard in uniform, came the hearse bearing the old warrior's body. Around it, in hollow square formation, marched the members of the U.S. Grant Post, G.A.R. Then followed the Washington Continental Guard from Washington, D.C.,

the Army and Navy Union, and carriages with members of the Cronk family. Carriages with Mayor McClellan and members of the city government brought up the rear." Taken from the Smithsonian.com

Editors note: This conflict bears closer examination if just for the perceptions that we have about it. Growing up in western New York I played over much of this area on both sides of the river. My Canadian cousins would re-enact many of the battle scenes with my brothers being the Americans and always the losers in every conflict. Their knowledge far surpassed what I had been taught in New York State History and US History and any argument I raised, colored by my perceptions of American Exceptionalism, I lost to the realities of history. From Fort Erie, to Queenston Heights, to the Battle of Lundy Lane, Fort George, Battle of Chippewa and finally Laura Secord, Canadian heroine and the Paulette Revere of Canada. All these are events that took place just on the western side of the Niagara River and demonstrating Canadian triumphs and American failures. The eastern shore shows further American ineptitude culminating with the capture of Fort Niagara, an embarrassment that lies buried in American military psyche. Canadian school children spend several weeks learning about the War of 1812 while across the border American students are lucking to have two lectures.

This is a time to re-examine the roles both nations played in this conflict and realize that as a result of this venture Canada gained a national identity and America almost lost New England to a threatened secession. The war was so unpopular in the Northeast that many American commercial interests even supplied the British with foodstuffs and materiel. The notion of Impressment was minimized but its impact on the families whose husbands, fathers and brothers just vanished was given cursory mention by the Federalists and deemed of little consequence. A yet to be examined phase of Impressment was brought to my attention on a recent visit to Lewiston, New York. It is contended in some quarters that British troops occasionally crossed the Niagara River and seized American boys to fill the ranks of a depleted British army in Canada. I have yet to find verification and several contemporary Canadian historians, most notably Zig Misiak, are unaware of any such activity.

A well written monograph by Laura Lincoln Cook, published by the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, 1961, can be read by accessing the following web site <http://bechsed.nylearns.org/pdf/The_War_of_1812_on_the_Frontier.pdf>. This 16 page treatise with maps and pictures may do much to illuminate any vacancies we have concerning this conflict and correct any misconceptions we have held. The Niagara Frontier, stretching only 30 miles from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario encompasses and area full of military history. All the historical sites are well-staffed by knowledgeable docents on both sides of the river. Commercial enterprises only become intrusive around the site of the Battle of Lundy Lane, otherwise, with little imagination you can transport yourself back to that period. In Lewiston there is a marker commemorating the visit of General Lafayette as the "nation's guest" when he made his visit in 1824. This is a remarkable area both historically and geographically and well worth your consideration. The views from the escarpment are incredible on both sides of the border and the Naval Museum in Buffalo rivals that of Patriots Point in Charleston, South Carolina sans the aircraft carrier.

Billy Mitchell - Redeemed

Although he died in 1936 his legacy regarding the unrecognized power of the airplane lived on through his disciples. Jeopardizing their own careers they continued in advocating the beliefs that Mitchell stridently advocated, much to his personal detriment. "Floating airbases", a separate air force divorced from the Army, and the effectiveness of bombers are just three of the positions he championed in 1918! His followers became the leaders of this new branch of service (USAAF), Henry "Hap" Arnold, Curtis LeMay, Eddie Rickenbacker, Carl "Tooey" Spaatz, Ira Clarence Eaker and Jimmy Doolittle. But his most important protege was a man who publicly denounced his ideas as "pernicious" in 1919. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt saw no merit in Mitchell's efforts. As President of the United States he realized the wisdom of this former airman and honored his memory by naming the only US warplane after an individual, the B-25 Mitchell.

FDR became so much of a believer that he directed funds to be spent ($3 Billion) for the development of a vehicle (B-29) to deliver a $2 Billion weapon (the atomic bomb). In addition, monies had been allocated for a number of different aircraft, both fighters and bombers. The bomber inventory was quite extensive. Below is a comparison of four WWII bombers and the Navy's A6 Intruder.

	COST	Max Spd	Cruise Spd	Ceiling	Range	Payload
B-25	$96,000	272 mph	230 mph	24,200 ft	1350 miles	3000 lbs
B-17	$238,000	287 mph	182 mph	35,600 ft	2000 miles 400 miles	6000 lbs 8000 lbs
B-24	$298,000	290 mph	215 mph	28,000 ft	400 miles 1200 miles	8000 lbs 2700 lbs
B-29	$640,000	357 mph	220 mph	31,850 ft	3250 miles	20,000 lbs
A-6	$43 million	648 mph	520 mph	40,600 ft	3245 miles	18,000 lbs

Without airpower the United States would have been at a almost fatal disadvantage compared to the Axis Powers. One can only shudder and wonder what would have happened if Billy Mitchell had not spoken up; if FDR had lost the 1940 Presidential election to Wendell Wilkie; if the Big Gun Navy had persevered and sunk the notion of "floating bases" or if courageous men had acted for their own well-being and not that of their country. But we must also caution ourselves for a hero in one area does immediately carry over to another. Curtis LeMay is one example. As a combat bomber leader in Europe he developed the combat box formation while leading the 305th Bomb Group. His leadership abilities coupled with his determination remind me of the Civil War General Sherman. He transferred to the Far East in 1944 and directed the XX Bomber Command in China and later the XXI Bomber Command in the Pacific. He was put in command of all strategic air operations against Japan and quickly realized that tactics employed in Europe did not successfully carry over to Japan. High altitude, daylight strategic bombing (+20,000 feet) was replaced by low altitude (5000-9000 feet) night time incendiary bombing.

On the night of March 10, 1945 325 B-29s stripped of all defensive guns and loaded with incendiary clusters, magnesium bombs, white phosphorus bombs and napalm flew over Tokyo. 1,665 tons of bombs were dropped, killing over 100,000 civilians, destroying 250,000 buildings and obliterating 16 square miles of the city. This tactic was instrumental in decimating the industrial capacity of Japan and reduced the island nation to an almost starvation state. LeMay went on to lead the USAAF into the USAF and develop the Strategic Air Command into the most formidable bomber force in history. In my estimation his most audacious move was to bypass the Army Ordnance Department and get the Stoner designed M-16 into the hands of Air Force Security Forces before Army Ordnance reared its ugly head and sabotaged the weapon. For that act alone he should be highly commended. But the caveat still remains that over time LeMay became similar to the ideologues he had long fought against. He became so entrenched in his philosophy of "bomb them back to the Stone Age" that he lost sight of the purpose of combat. His contributions will be debated long into the future and he was unquestionably a great leader, but like many of his predecessors he failed to appreciate and anticipate the changing face of warfare. It is an ever changing landscape colored by terrain, people and purpose, one style does not fit all situations. When civilian leaders can adequately present purpose and goals, only then can our combat leaders devise a successful strategy. We are learning but the last 25 years have shown that for every step forward we take two back.

Our Armed Services are still competing with each other much to the detriment of our Nation. Like the early space program with the Army's Redstone Rocket and the Navy's Vanguard Missile, the goal was the same but the methods employed wasted too much time, talent and financial resources. Only when civilian leadership stepped in to end the squabbling and more efficiently organize the efforts did we see success. Military minds become frozen in their conceptions of combat, unwavering in their belief that they know best. The answer truly lies in the point of the spear. Given clearly defined purposes and goals, we should seek out those at the tip who can better anticipate their needs and give them what they require not what some civilian or military bureaucrat thinks they need. As a former Secretary of Defense once remarked when queried on personal protection, "you'll fight with what I give you." Two steps back **again.**

50 years and Still Searching

Operations in Afghanistan frequently require United States ground forces to engage and destroy the enemy at ranges beyond 300 meters. These operations occur in rugged terrain and in situations where traditional supporting fires are limited due to range or risk of collateral damage. With these limitations, the infantry in Afghanistan require a precise, lethal fire capability that exists only in a properly trained and equipped infantryman. While the infantryman is ideally suited for combat in Afghanistan, his current weapons, doctrine, and marksmanship training do not provide a precise, lethal fire capability to 500 meters and are therefore inappropriate. Comments from returning non-commissioned officers and officers reveal that about fifty percent of engagements occur past 300 meters. The enemy tactics are to engage United States forces from high ground with medium and heavy weapons, often including mortars, knowing that we are restricted by our equipment limitations and the inability of our overburdened soldiers to maneuver at elevations exceeding 6000 feet. Current equipment, training, and doctrine are optimized for engagements under 300 meters and on level terrain.

There are several ways to extend the lethality of the infantry. A more effective 5.56-mm bullet can be designed which provides enhanced terminal performance out to 500 meters. A better option to increase incapacitation is to adopt a larger caliber cartridge, which will function using components of the M16/M4. The 2006 study by the Joint Service Wound Ballistics – Integrated Product Team discovered that the ideal caliber seems to be between 6.5 and 7-mm. This was also the general conclusion of all military ballistics studies since the end of World War I.

The reorganization of the infantry squad in 1960 eliminated the M1D sniper rifle and resulted in the loss of the precision mid-range capability of the infantry squad. The modern solution to this problem is the squad designated marksman. The concept of the squad designated marksman is that a soldier receives the training necessary to engage targets beyond the 300-meter range limitation of current marksmanship programs, but below the 600 meter capability of actual snipers. As of June 2009, the equipment and training of the squad designated marksman has yet to be standardized. In field manual 3-22.9 there are only fourteen pages dedicated to training the squad designated marksman.

Any weapon system designed to perform in various environments will invariably make compromises in order to perform all requirements. The modular nature of the M4/M16 series of weapons lends itself to the arms room concept. Under the arms room concept, each soldier would have multiple weapons and optics combinations available. Commanders would have the flexibility to adjust the capabilities of the infantry squad for the anticipated environment while maintaining commonality of the manual of arms.

Finally, the current qualification course does not accurately depict the enemy on the battlefield. It is based on the 1960's and 70's concept of active defense strategy. Targets come up and depending on their range, remain up for a period of five to ten seconds. The modern battlefield is never this static. Soldiers fire twenty rounds from a prone or foxhole-supported position, then ten rounds from a prone-unsupported position and finally ten rounds from the kneeling position. Soldiers are conditioned to expect that their targets will not move, will only require one shot to incapacitate, and that a hit anywhere will result in that incapacitation.

The Army now has the opportunity to rectify this degradation of marksmanship capability and take back the infantry half kilometer. The ability to engage targets out to 500 meters requires significant revisions to doctrine, training, and equipment. These revisions require emphasis from the highest levels

of military leadership.

The Army's Project Manager, Maneuver Ammunition Systems, assembled a team of experts to determine if there were any commercial off the shelf (COTS) 5.56-mm bullets or other calibers that were better than M855. The Joint Service Wound Ballistic - Integrated Product Team (JSWB-IPT) conducted tests in 2006 and determined that an intermediate caliber was the answer to trade off balance. They also found that 6.8-mm was "far and above the best performing ammunition tested" and that the 6.8-mm cartridge offered the optimal balance of mass, velocity and configuration. In the overall ranking of the cartridges tested, the 6.8-mm cartridge placed first, beating the 7.62x51-mm cartridge.

The 6.8-mm Special Purpose Cartridge (SPC) fires a 110-grain bullet at a velocity of 2,650 feet per second. Unlike M855, it is optimized for short-barreled carbines and does not rely solely on fragmentation to incapacitate. This cartridge can be used in existing M4/M16 rifles with only a change in the barrel, bolt, and magazine, making it a cost effective alternative to procuring a new rifle. The magazines for this cartridge are externally identical to the 5.56mm versions, so they will fit in existing load carrying equipment and pouches. See below for relative size comparison of military cartridges. From left to right the cartridges are:

1. 30-06
2. 7.62x51
3. 6.8 SPC
4. 7.62x39
5. 5.56 "Green Tip"

In 2002, Bill Alexander of Alexander Arms and Arne Brennan of Competition shooting sports developed the 6.5-mm Grendel cartridge. It was designed so that it would function on the M16/M4 platform and deliver increased lethality at extended ranges while producing low recoil. In contrast to the 6.8 SPC cartridge, the designers used a longer bullet and shorter case to fit the magazine length limitation of the M4/M16. In doing so, they developed a cartridge that fires a streamlined bullet that retains velocity better than the 6.8 SPC, equating to better overall performance beyond 400 meters. There are several benefits to the design approach used for this caliber. First, there is a larger selection of bullet weights available for the cartridge. Current options provide bullet weights from 90 grains up to 144 grains allowing for a heavy machinegun round and a lighter assault rifle round. Second, sectional density of the 6.5 Grendel, when loaded with its heavier bullets allows for increased hard target penetration. This hard target penetration is so good that it exceeded the penetration capability of 7.62x51-mm out to a distance of 1000 meters.

In comparing the 6.5 Grendel with the 6.8 SPC it becomes clear that the 6.5 Grendel is better suited to extended engagment distances. In comparing retained velocity and energy, the 6.8 SPC with a 115 grain bullet has a velocity of 1,461 feet per second and 545 foot pounds of energy at 600 meters. The 6.5 Grendel with 123 grain bullet has a velocity of 1,881 feet per second and 946 foot pounds of energy, almost twice that of the 6.8. Interestingly, the 6.5 Grendel cartridge is ballistically very similar to the British .280 caliber cartridge (*Ed. note Army Ordnance vigorously fought against such a cartridge in 1953)* designed after World War II but discarded when the U.S forced NATO to adopt the 7.62x51 cartridge.

The 6.5 Grendel cartridge is the first viable option for a one caliber system, able to replace the 7.62x51 cartridge of sniper rifles and machine guns. This is especially true given the 6.5 Grendels penetration capability and long range effectiveness. Its size allows it to be fired within existing M4/M16 lower recievers and for the M249 to be modified to accept the new round with relativley little to moderate modification. The only negative aspect of the 6.5 Grendel is that it has not been tested as extensively as the 6.8 SPC. Initial comparison between the two cartridges reveals that 6.8 SPC is more lethal from zero to 400 meters and 6.5 Grendel is more lethal beyond 400 meters and offers better penetration of barriers.

Ed. note: now after 50+ years we are again at the same fork in the road, a decision as to which cartridge to develop. At least this time the Ordnance mantra of "a waste of ammunition" (referring to automatic fire) has been replace by "effective fire down range" and the sacred .30 caliber cartridge proponents, like the Big Gun Navy advocates, have hopefully either been silenced or have past on. Too long the American infantryman has been neglected and relegated to a secondary concern. The effectiveness and survivability of every American servicemen should always be of primary importance in the selection of any future weapon system. Hopefully we will take two steps forward and continue onward.