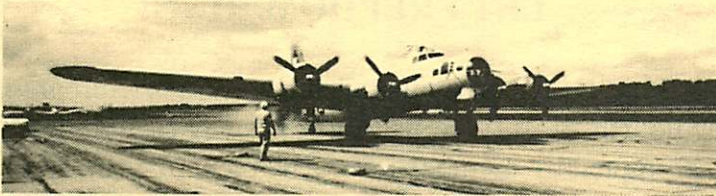


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The High and The Mighty

For four days in September the Oakland County International Airport resembled a scene from the movie "Twelve O'Clock High." There beneath the tower awaiting take off instructions sat a Boeing B-17 "Flying Fortress," whose older sisters had delivered



Firing up the first engine, the "Aluminum Overcast" is only one of a few B-17's still flying.

death and destruction to our World War II enemies in Europe and the Far East. But this restored bomber carried no weapons, only happy civilians eager to take an air tour aboard one of the finest military aircraft ever built.

This B-17 was delivered to the U.S. Army Air Corps on May 18, 1945, too late to see combat in World War II. Unlike so many regarded as obsolete and surplus after the war, she was saved from the scrap heap by her first civilian owner in June of 1946. For the next 33 years this airplane would perform many duties for many owners: surveying, aerial spraying, and fire fighting among them. Finally in 1981 the bomber, now known as the "Aluminum Overcast," was purchased by the EAA Aviation Foundation. As its present owner this organization works diligently to make sure the airplane stays in airworthy condition as she appears at many air shows and aviation events across the



Getting ready for takeoff, the "Aluminum Overcast" consumes approximately 200 gallons of fuel per hour in flight.

nation. Funds raised at these events are used to offset operating and restoration costs. Following her appearance here the B-17 was scheduled to make stops in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, and Illinois. Her home base is the EAA's Air Adventure Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

A total of 12,731 "Flying Fortresses" were built by Boeing and other companies. Most were delivered for service with the 7th and 8th Air Forces although these bombers were active in every theater of operation during World War II. Over one-third were lost while on combat missions. Today only a few remain and even fewer are still considered airworthy.

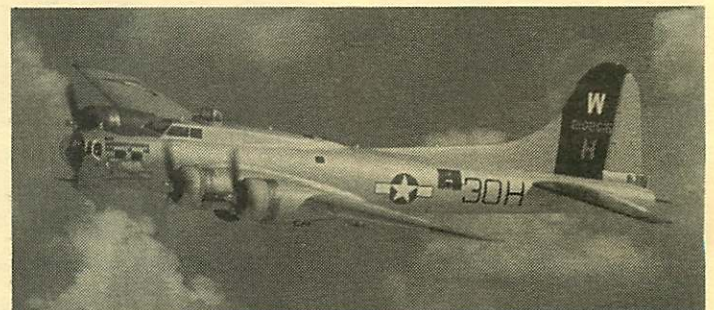
Designated a B-17G the "Aluminum Overcast" represents an improved model that sports a two-gun "chin" turret designed to counter head-on attacks by enemy fighters. To further reduce B-17 combat losses the U.S. Army Air Force employed P-38 (Lightning), P-47 (Thunderbolt), and P-51 (Mustang) fighters to



Awaiting instructions from the Oakland County International airport tower, the "Aluminum Overcast" is a proud example of our nation's air might from another era.

accompany the bombers on their missions.

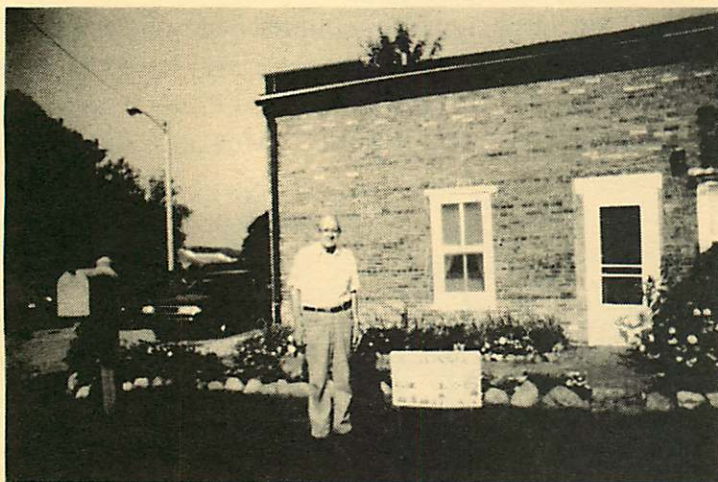
At present the airplane carries the colors of the 398th Bomb Group, commemorating B-17G (#42-102516), which was shot down on its 34th combat mission over Le Manior, France on August 13, 1944. The 398th Bomb Group donated the funds to have the "Aluminum Overcast" painted.



In flight the sleek lines of the "Aluminum Overcast" belie her once deadly punch as a B-17G "Flying Fortress."

SUMMER SUCCESSES

Congratulations to Tom Kamlay and son Mike for painting the exterior of the Drayton Plains one-room schoolhouse. The finished job looks fantastic. The white sidewalls and green doors restore charm and character to a building that dates back to 1865. Tom insisted that we only pay him for materials, a very generous offer when one considers the size of the building and heat of summer. The next challenge is to paint the school's interior. Rosamond Haeberle, schoolhouse and education chairperson, has held a series of meetings to settle on the appropriate color scheme and other details.



Clarke Kimball's gardening skills make Pine Grove a winner again.

Pine Grove's curb appeal has again won recognition with the announcement that our grounds are a recipient of the 1997 City of Pontiac Pride and Beautification Award. Thanks go to Clarke Kimball for his tireless efforts at planting and tending the flowers and to Gale Scafe for his neat manicuring of the lawn with the riding mower.



Board Member, Gil Haven (left) with employee of Erle Construction, Madison Heights

A long anticipated improvement to the kitchen entrance was completed this September under the direction of Board Member, Gil Haven, shown here on the left with an employee of Erle Construction of Madison Heights. An old concrete walkway was removed by the contractor, and after the ground was prepared, some 700 bricks were laid in neat order by Mr. Haven. Now the rear of the house is just as presentable as the front, thanks to Gil.

LET FREEDOM RING!

Pine Grove participated in the national program, "Fourth of July Bells Across America," this year prompted by member Bette Twyman, her family and friends. At the appropriate moment the old Pontiac Central School bell on the grounds was rung to commemorate this important date in our country's history.



Front row (left to right): Sarah, Elena, and David Beutler. Back row (left to right) David, Cindy and Jane Beutler, Tara and Bette Twyman, and Don Beutler.

SPREADING THE WORD

During recent months the Society's Outreach Program has been busy, according to member Bob Reynnells. In July, two presentations were made at Waltonwood (assisted living) in Rochester Hills. The audience there for the men's group alone numbered 40 persons. On September 4th the GM "Golden Handshake" gathering at the Waterford Elks Club heard a presentation on Pine Grove and pioneer tools. There were some 92 ladies and gentlemen in attendance on that occasion. On September 8th our

administrator, Charlie Martinez, gave a slide lecture for a Clinton Valley Chapter meeting of the Michigan Archaeological Society at Cranbrook Institute of Science. It was entitled, "We are Coming Father Abraham," the story of Oakland County's participation in the Civil War. Finally, it should be noted that Sid Olson, Jack Moore, and Bob Reynnells acted as stationary guides at our Ice Cream Social.

GREAT SHIPS OF THE GREAT LAKES

Pontiac's Name Preserved in Great Lakes Commerce, Part 3

In 1993 the Oakland Gazette launched a series of articles telling how the name of Pontiac, redoubtable Ottawa chief, had been preserved in a number of Great Lakes vessels. In contrast to our last example - Pontiac (2), a Cleveland-Cliffs bulk carrier - we present in this issue a tiny model by comparison but one that served the public with equal reliability and honor.

Through time the Detroit River between the Motor City and Windsor has been traversed by a succession of craft: canoes paddled by native Americans, bateaux used by Frenchmen, rowboats and skiffs employed by British colonials, and in the nineteenth century larger capacity ferryboats owned by Canadians and Americans.

From 1856 until the 1920s ferry service linking the two countries here was a highly competitive and occasionally quite profitable enterprise. A major player in moving the people and freight across the river was Captain John Horn of Detroit. Horn was the P.T. Barnum of the ferryboat business. His greatest thrill was devising ways to beat competition. In 1868 Horn launched his boat *Favorite* which was built to take advantage of the Canadian evening party crowd who were anxious to hit Detroit night spots. *Favorite* was an instant success. Her popularity with day or night commuters was so

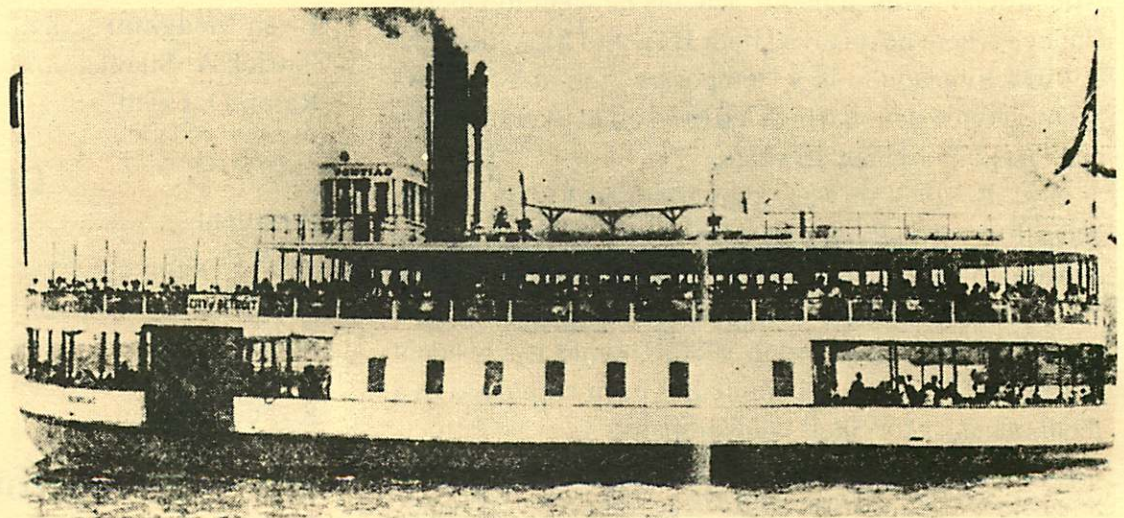
great, a fare war resulted. Moreover, in contrast to side-wheel ferryboats, Horn's vessel was screw-driven and sported a hull sheathed in iron plates that made her equal to the task of breaking through winter ice.

In 1876 Horn built another vessel and called her *Excelsior*. She had the bulky look of a Mississippi riverboat which appealed to certain romantic, adventurous types. But, as time went by, she was slimmed down and given a new name *Pontiac*. Without serious problems she faithfully transported millions of customers and countless tons of freight to and from Detroit and Windsor for many years.

The autumn of 1925 produced heavy fog on the Detroit River. A resultant collision between two ferryboats brought the old steamer back from retirement for a brief while. It would be the last time the *Pontiac* would operate between these two cities.

Not all Horn's vessels had unblemished service records, however. His *Garland*, which took to the waves in 1880, is an example. The first ferryboat on the Detroit River to feature electric lights, she was adored by the public. But this innovation didn't help her in a collision with the yacht *Mamie* one night on the river near Wyandotte. Seventeen persons on a Holy Trinity Catholic Church outing, including 11 youngsters, drowned.

Public outrage and a subsequent trial did little to improve navigational safety of the river. The tragedy soon faded and ferry commerce continued unabated until the 1930s when a new tunnel and the Ambassador Bridge spelt doom for the little boats.



After a few years in service the *EXCELSIOR* was rebuilt as shown above and renamed the *PONTIAC*.

MEMBER PROFILE

During the summer of 1995 the Society received a beautiful broadside depicting the City of Cleveland's excursion run to Put-In-Bay with the Franklin Cornet Band supplying the musical entertainment. The framed sheet, which measures 26 by 40 inches, was a gift of member Emerson Gravlin, former Oakland County resident now living in Centerville, Ohio.

Mr. Gravlin (spelling var. Gravelin) is a grandson of Joseph Gravlin, who along with brothers Noble and Frank were musicians in the band. Joe and Noble moved to the Franklin Village area around 1864. The band was formed 21 years later and rose to prominence entertaining political and social gatherings. Emerson said the group met once a week to receive instructions from Professor Frank Norton of Detroit. A fine of ten cents was levied against any member who missed a practice session. The band's last engagement occurred on July 4th, 1895 at the Redford Races.



Emerson Gravlin

Member Emerson is the youngest son of Noble Gravlin who left the family farm in 1895 to find employment working on the new Detroit United Railway line running between that city and Pontiac. Two years later he became a motorman for the line and moved to Birmingham, where the DUR carbarns were located. Dedicated to this form of transport, Noble died of a heart attack at the controls of a car in 1930.

Emerson was born in Birmingham, Michigan in 1908. After attending local public schools he went to Oberlin College where he received both B.A. and M.A. degrees. In 1934 Emerson took a "temporary" job at a Socony-Mobil service station which led to an oil marketing career that lasted more than 40 years.

In early 1942 he was commissioned Lt. (jg) in the Navy. Emerson served four years in the Pacific as a troop landing officer. That same year he married Lillie Thompson, a Michigan social worker. They were to have a son Thomas. Lillie died in 1970. Thomas is a resident of Centerville, Ohio, where he has been employed as a retail manager for Shell Oil Company.

Executed in red ink on a light-grey background, the broadside headlines the "Justly Celebrated Cornet Band" that "discourses sweet music" on the steamboat trip to

and from Put-In-Bay. The fare was \$1.25 per person with three hours spent on the island and later one and one-half hours given to window shopping in Detroit before departing by train at 8:00 p.m., for the return trip to Royal Oak and Birmingham.

While the broadside is undated research assistance from the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle and the Burton Historical Collection in Detroit suggests a time range from 1889 to 1895. Emerson Gravlin believes the former year to be more accurate.

Editor. In the preparation of this article we are indebted to *The Descendants*, the official publication of the Urbain B. Graveline Genealogical Association, Inc., in Palmer Maine.



The Gravelin brothers were an integral part of the Franklin Cornet Band in 1885. Front row, second from left, Noble Gravelin; Third row, first from left, Frank Gravelin; second from right, Joe Gravelin.

NEW MEMBERS

Terrence A. McCormick	Pontiac
Maura Overland	Ypsilanti
Wilma Mergler	Mt. Vernon, WA
Wilbert Williamson	Waterford
Brian Menghini	Waterford
Patrick A. Shaul	Novi
Ralph D. Cobb	Williamsburg, VA

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1st V.P.	Mike Willis
2nd V.P.	Clarke Kimball
Secretary	Erma McMillen
Treasurer	Dan Carmichael
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Associate Editor	Ross Callaway

On the Cutting Edge

by Charles H. Martinez

Before war became impersonal and hand-to-hand fighting the exception, the sword ruled supreme for dispatching one's enemy. Its decline was tied to the invention of gunpowder and improvements in the ignition and accuracy of devices that employed such explosive propellants. As a result, by the time of our Civil War, the sword had been relegated to a symbol of rank and used restrictively in some cavalry engagements. In this second and final installment we will deal with those cutting or piercing instruments owned by the Society that saw service in that terrible conflict. Part 2.

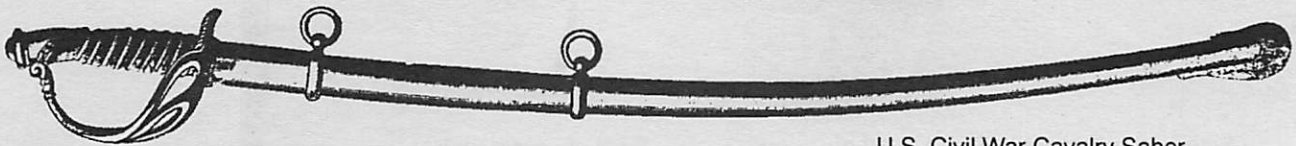
Historian William Fox makes the point that of the approximately 250,000 wounded treated in Union hospitals during the war that only 922 were the victims of sabers or bayonets. "And a large proportion of these originated in private quarrels, or were inflicted by camp guards in the discharge of their duty."¹ Precisely how many casualties can be attributed to swords alone on either side in that war is unknown.

Records do exist, however, as to the types of small arms and side arms issued Michigan

by the War Department in 1840 and were patterned after French army designs.

The noncommissioned officer sword had an overall length of 37-1/2 inches with a blade slightly under 32 inches. The hilt was made of cast brass with a flattened knuckle-bow. The accompanying scabbard was made of iron varnished black and sported a brass throat and tip. The musician sword was nearly identical, differing only in a single counter-guard and shorter blade.³ When not playing their instruments, musicians were expected to act as litter bearers in combat. How a musician could defend himself with such a slender reed in the face of a charging Johnnie Reb equipped with musket and bayonet was never explained by the Federal military establishment.

Of even less value was the Model 1833 foot artilleryman's short sword which resembled a weapon once carried by Roman legions. It had a straight 19-inch, double-edged blade. The hilt was fabricated of cast brass with the grip portion given a scalloped decoration to vaguely suggest eagle feathers. Tacticians recom-



U.S. Civil War Cavalry Saber

units in the Civil War. For example, Moses Wisner's regiment, the Twenty-second, received from ordnance stores between its departure for the front in September of 1862 and its maneuvers in the field in early 1863 a number of musician and noncommissioned officer swords.² Both types had been adopted

mended that artillerymen use this weapon to disembowel passing enemy cavalry mounts! Amazingly the sword remained standard issue until 1870.

The piece de resistance of edged weapons in the Society's collection is the sword that once belonged to Colonel Moses Wisner. It is a

nicely decorated variation of the 1850 staff and field officer sword. In overall length this implement measures 38 inches while its blade is six inches shorter. The blade is embellished with engraved floral devices. Amid this pattern on one side is an American eagle holding in its beak a ribbon that bears the legend "E. Pluribus Unum", and on the other the large initials "U.S." Below the hilt is the stamped maker's mark composed of a knight flanked by the words "W. CLAUB [?] ERG/SOLINGEN," a German manufacturer. On the opposite surface is a small circlet bearing the word "PROVED."

The hilt of Wisner's sword is most beautiful.



Fine workmanship displayed in hilt of
Colonel Wisner's Sword

The grips are silver wrapped with twisted copper wire. The guard is made of gilded brass in the half basket design with two branches exhibiting finely wrought floral decorations but lacking the telltale initials "U.S." by which this sword is most readily distinguished from the one carried by foot officers. Inside the guard

is engraved "Col. M. Wisner." The companion scabbard is iron and is varnished black. The fittings are gilded brass to match the guard.

The fact that Wisner's sword was of foreign manufacture was not unusual. General Ripley, Union Chief of Ordnance, reported that between June 30, 1862 and the start of hostilities the Federal government had obtained 2, 107 officer swords from overseas sources as opposed to 1,352 specimens from American outlets.⁴ The same ratio was probably true for those edged weapons that were given special touches or were of presentation grade.

It would appear that Wisner's sword saw action in the "Battle of Cabbage Patch" which took place south of Covington, Kentucky in September of 1862. There, while awaiting a southern attack that never came, Colonel Wisner is said to have slashed nervously at



Colonel Wisner's sword and scabbard

several cabbages in a farmer's garden muttering he wished they were rebels' heads.⁵

Who presented this sword to Colonel Wisner is still unclear. It was customary for such a gift to be bestowed upon the officer by his grateful town, fellow members of his military unit, or his loving wife. Doubtlessly the event occurred prior to his regiment's departure for the front in early September of 1862. Upon his death outside Lexington, Kentucky four months later, this side arm certainly accompanied his remains and the funeral party back to Pontiac. Accounts tell us the body was not embalmed and the laying-in-state period relatively brief. His sword and probably the national flag were placed on the casket and later presented to his widow at or before the committal service.

The largest edged weapon which the Society has displayed in the past is an 1840 Dragoon saber said to have been used by a U.S. Cavalryman in the Civil War. Known as "Old Wristbreaker" for the pain and fatigue caused by wielding this heavy implement in battle, the specimen has a 41-1/2 inch overall length. The blade is 35-1/2 inches long. The metal part of the hilt is fabricated of brass while the grips are of wood covered with leather and wrapped with gilt wire. The scabbard is of iron and very substantially made with a pair of rings for

carrying slings and a strong tip or drag.

Shortly after the Civil War began, demand for a lighter weapon forced the introduction of



Society's Civil War bayonet and scabbard

the Model 1860 Light Cavalry saber. It can be easily set apart from the earlier type by the rounded back of the lighter blade and by the shape of the grips which have a thicker center section. This substitution of sabers must have been equally favored by Union cavalry mounts, as field reports revealed the heavier model saber produced many one-eared horses during training sessions.

In reality, most Civil War cavalry engagements were fought dismounted. This was primarily due to the universal rule of tactics that stresses concealment from the enemy and the utilization of terrain that supports such a dictum. The over-glorified cavalry charge under such conditions would be impractical if not impossible. So, both sides drew on a rather extensive arsenal composed of pistols, rifles, and carbines to battle the foe. For example, Michigan cavalry troopers were well equipped with Spencer carbines, Colt revolving rifles, and Colt army revolvers, among other side arms.⁶

Bayonets also had their place in Civil War equipment. Each rifle or musket of that day had its provision for a socket or saber bayonet. The socket type was afforded all U.S. regulated



Duel between a Union Cavalryman and a Confederate Trooper

muskets and rifles except for the following: Model 1841 rifle, 1855 rifle, and the 1863 Remington rifle. Merrill and Sharps rifles were compatible with saber bayonets.⁷ It is said that the saber type was unpopular with a number of U.S. units because they were considered unwieldy.

The Society has an excellent example of a Civil War bayonet with matching scabbard in its collection. This is a socket-type weapon with a 16-1/2 inch triangular blade. Its scabbard, made of leather with brass furniture, has a pivotal attachment to the soldier's belt.

The 22nd Michigan Regiment was initially issued 54. caliber Austrian muskets and (British) Enfield rifle-muskets, which were supplemented toward the close of the war with U.S. 1855, 61 and 63 rifle-muskets.⁸ Therefore, both socket and saber bayonets would have been found over time in the ranks of the 22nd. A member of that unit, Thomas Tucker, recalled in his diary that a soldier in Company G employed his musket and bayonet to foil an attempted escape of prisoners in Nashville, Tennessee on September 2, 1863.⁹

However, it was nearly three weeks later when the most dramatic use of the 22nd's bayonets occurred. At twilight on September 20, 1863 as the climax to the Battle of Chickamuga was reached, the 22nd found its ammunition exhausted. The word came down from Brigadier General Walter C. Whitaker, "You must use the bayonet!" So under terrible fire the regiment rushed forward with bayonets fixed on empty muskets and drove the enemy back. This was a valiant but futile effort for within minutes the 22nd was surrounded and forced to surrender. Their ranks had been reduced to 178 men and 14 officers, a shadow of the 500 who had answered roll call that morning.¹⁰

NOTES

1. Mark M. Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 260-61.
2. Michigan Civil War Observance Commission, *Small Arms Used by Michigan Troops in the Civil War* (Lansing, 1966), 37.
3. *Ibid.*, 126.
4. William A. Albaugh and Richard D. Steuart, *Handbook of Confederate Swords* (Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1951), 5.
5. Robert G. Tucker, *Tucker War Years and The Farm* (Renton, Washington: privately published, 1991), 17.
6. James G. Genco, *Arming Michigan's Regiments 1862-1864* (privately published, 1982), 7-9.
7. Francis A. Lord, *They Fought for the Union* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Company, 1960), 143.
8. Genco, 55-56.
9. Tucker, 66-67.
10. Michigan Adjutant General's Office, *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War 1861-1865*, V. 22 (Kalamazoo: Shling Bros. & Everard, 1905), 10. John Robertson, *Michigan in the War* (Lansing: W.S. George & Co., 1882), 423-24.