



CIVIL WAR VETERANS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
"The 4th Battalion"

Volume THREE Number ONE

JULY, 1989

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

My sincere welcome to all of our new members who will be receiving their newsletter for the first time with this issue. I trust the last few months have been fruitful to everyone's collecting and researching. I know of at least two rare items that have surfaced....a very rare G. A. R. post badge and a G. A. R. national commander's hat shield. I am sure that there have been others on both sides-Blue and Gray. We have also had a member of our association who participated in the filming of the coming movie "GLORY". It will debut in December and is about the 54th Mass. (a black regiment) and the storming of Fort Wagner, South Carolina. I want to encourage all of you once again to send in any information for our newsletter to our secretary. Don't think for a moment that what you have will not be enjoyed by others, or that possibly it is not significant enough to send in....Our association was founded to share knowledge and information on the veterans. I can assure you that everything submitted will be printed. Finally, I hope all of you and your families have an enjoyable summer and I know I'll probably see at least some of you "out looking" at one of the upcoming civil war shows in the east.

Sincerely,
Dennis R. Loba

The post badge mentioned in the above message was from Lima, Peru and the hat shield belonged to C.W. Jones National Commander 1943.

Excellent progress is being made on the restoration of the G. A. R. building in Gettysburg, Pa. The brick walls have been straightened and reinforced, rafters have been re-joined in preparation for the new roof. The basement area has been excavated and a cement floor poured. The space will be used as a museum archives room. Work on the building is nearly 50% completed.

Echoes of the Blue & Gray. Civil War Veterans on VHS Video Cassette. Actual newsreel film interviews and footage of Civil War veterans taken in the early 20th century. Portions of the film were shown at the Gettysburg Civil War show and was excellent. For more information write to: Belle Grove Publishing Co. Box 483, Kearny, N. J. 07032

In response to a frequently asked question, The most difficult G. A. R. National Delegate badges to acquire are 1883 Denver, Colorado--1947 Cleveland, Ohio--1948 Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Comrades of the Battlefield.

NATIONAL OFFICERS, COMMITTEES, &c., OF THE COMRADES OF THE BATTLEFIELD—1891-2.

General Commanding.....Geo. E. Dolton, St. Louis, Mo.
 Lieutenant General.....Lewis J. Allen, Battle Creek, Mich.
 Register General.....Thomas Trahey, St. Louis, Mo.
 Judge Advocate General.....Jacob Shively, Anderson, Ohio.
 Quartermaster General.....John R. Moore, Puyallup, Wash.
 Surgeon General.....Dr. Thos. H. Briggs, Battle Creek, Mich.
 Chaplain in Chief.....E. T. Sowers, St. Louis, Mo.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

Geo. E. Dolton, St. Louis, Mo. E. T. Les, Monticello, Ill.
 Robt. S. Giberson, East Newbern, Ill. S. J. Murphy, Grant Park, Ill.
 Dr. Thos. H. Briggs, Battle Creek, Mich. Thos. W. Gook, Newbern, Ill.
 Eugene Paine, Iowa City, Iowa.

COURT OF INQUIRY.

Lieut. R. B. Grace, }
 E. I. Bevan, } St. Louis, Mo.
 E. T. Sowers, }

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Martin Carroll, }
 Charles Stegtmeyer, } St. Louis, Mo.
 Louis Viahman, }

HISTORY OF THE ORDER.

The Comrades of the Battlefield, (then called the "Order of Three Months' Men.") was first suggested at St. Louis, Mo., by comrade Geo. E. Dolton, in September, 1887, in a jest, and was so used until December, 1890, when he wrote an article for the *National Tribune*, which appeared in its issue of January 1, 1891, when the comrades who saw the article took a serious view of the matter, and it was at once apparent from the tone of the many letters on the subject, that such an order was greatly desired by the Battle-ans of the War of the Rebellion.

The following comrades addressed comrade Dolton on the subject on January 2, 1891:

Geo. H. Allen, Providence, R. I. Lewis J. Allen, Battle Creek, Mich.
 J. T. Gaston, Bridgeton, N. J. Dr. W. P. Youkey, Rossville, Ind.
 Capt. J. B. Ridenour, Woodhull, Ill.

Comrade E. T. Sowers, of St. Louis, Mo., was the first comrade consulted on the subject of the Order by comrade Dolton. The word that such an Order was contemplated, spread rapidly, which resulted in the called meeting held at Detroit, Mich., August 5, 1891, for organization.

At that time the applications of comrades residing in eighteen States and Territories had been favorably acted upon by the Temporary Investigating Committee—it at first being Comrades Martin Carroll, E. I. Bevan, and E. T. Sowers, of St. Louis, and later Lieut. R. B. Grace, of St. Louis, was put in comrade Carroll's place, as the duties of the latter prevented his attending the necessary weekly meetings of the committee.

Temporary certificates and ribbons of the Order were issued to each applicant favorably passed upon. "Ninety days service under fire of the enemy" was the minimum limit required to make an applicant eligible, to agree with the original "Three Months Under Fire," or "Order of Three Months Men." The name was changed to "Comrades of the Battlefield," January 10th, and first "Battlefield," "Chickamauga," organized at St. Louis, January 30, 1891.

CONSTITUTION.

Article 1. Name.

Sec. 1. This Order shall be known and designated as the "Comrades of the Battlefield."

Article 2. Membership.

Sec. 1. Each ex-soldier or sailor of the War of 1861-5, who served the Nation ninety (90) or more days under fire of the enemy, or who was so wounded on the field of battle as to prevent further service there, or who was captured in battle while manfully performing his duty, who was held in confinement by the enemy, thus preventing his full 90 day service under fire, who shall make formal application to this Order, accompanied by proofs sufficient to establish his said service beyond question, shall be deemed eligible to membership in this Order, on payment of a fee of \$3.00 which shall accompany the application. He shall then be entitled to a Certificate which shall state his service as proven, and a Badge of this Order.

Article 3. Officers.

Sec. 1. The officers of this Order shall be a "General Commanding," a Lieutenant-General," a "Register-General," a "Judge-Advocate-General," a "Quartermaster-General," a "Surgeon-General" and a "Chaplain-in-Chief."

Sec. 2. The above designated officers shall be elected and proper ones installed each year at the annual meeting of the Order, a majority of the votes cast being necessary to a choice.

Sec. 3. All officers shall serve until their successors are duly chosen and qualified.

NATURE AND OBJECTS OF THE ORDER.

This is not a secret organization.

There is nothing about the Order that necessitates secrecy.

There are no oaths and no imposed obligations.

There is no necessity for oaths and promises (intended to be broken every lay in the year).

Were it possible for a member to forget his natural duty to his Comrades of the Battlefield, or their widows and orphans, he would have deserted his comrades under fire, and one who was there to touch elbow so long as he was not disabled, will never deserve the ignominious title—"Deserter."

This is not an Order where the fraternal ties which bind its members together, were formed in the Lodge Room, the Club, the "Post," or even on the tented field. The bonds which unite the members of this Fraternity are such as come from association amid scenes of carnage, and the greatest tortures and mutilations the flesh of man can be put to.

We are a band of men united by the ties formed in "Auld Lang Syne," when we stood side by side amid the carnage of the battlefield, and what we are doing, and propose to do for ourselves, and our posterity, is on account of what was done on those fields. On that record we base and rest our case.

We are American Citizens, and as such, we feel that we know our duty to our government, and our record under fire should indicate what our course would be, should occasion again arise.

One great purpose of this Order is to collect and preserve the records of Service on the Battlefield and it is that only which is considered when one is admitted; therefore, one remains a member through life, if once admitted unless it shall be found that he secured admission by fraud.

We do not inquire what a soldier was before the war, nor what he has been since.

Our purpose is the preservation of the history of the war as made by the individual under fire of the enemy.

RECORDS OF THE DEAD, AND OF THOSE WHO SERVED UNDER FIRE LESS THAN 90 DAYS.

A proper committee of the Order will also examine proofs and issue certificates of the same, to the relatives of deceased Comrades, showing the service under fire, wounds, captivity, etc., of such comrades, that all service under fire by the defenders of the Republic may be collected and preserved. Persons desiring to secure such certificate will notify the General-Commanding, who will inform them what steps to take. Also, all Comrades who served less than ninety days under fire, should address the General-Commanding as to what to do to secure a Certificate of their service.

CERTIFICATES, &c., FOR CHILDREN OF C. OF B.

The instant a comrade is admitted to the Order of Comrades of the Battlefield, each of his children, regardless of age or sex, is entitled to a Certificate showing his father's War Record. Those Certificates can be had at any time on payment of the actual cost of the Certificates and postage. Proper Badges can also be had at cost. Certainly, every child will carefully treasure them through life, and when it comes to realize their full import, it will have a deeper love for our Nation and greater veneration for its father's service for it, than it can possibly otherwise have.

When a Comrade becomes a Member of the Comrades of the Battlefield,

he should send a list of his children to the Register-General, giving their age, sex, etc., that the same may be recorded on the National Roll Book, and all born thereafter should be reported. The death of a child of a Member should be promptly reported to guard against possible future impostors.

REBIBONS FOR FEMALE RELATIVES, &c.

The loyal mothers, wives, sisters and children of members can secure proper ribbons to show their relationship to the Comrades. These ribbons cost but a trifle, but their value one can scarcely imagine.

TO SECURE AND PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF THE WAR.

It is intended to subscribe for each publication, either Union or Ex-Confederate, that habitually publishes articles concerning the War of the Rebellion—all articles of any historical value to be preserved in properly classified manner, by the National Battlefield of the Comrades of the Battlefield.

It is, also, the intention to have each Local Battlefield supplied with a copy of each article published concerning the battle for which the local Battlefield is named.

CERTIFICATE AND BADGE.

This being the grandest, most noble Order in existence, it must be so guarded and protected and kept so absolutely free from the ineligible or impostors, that wherever the Badge of the Order is seen worn, it will be revered and its wearer cherished by all admirers of Patriotism, Bravery, Courage and Endurance.

To thus protect it, the Badge, Certificate, &c., are so marked that they can be made no use of by any one but their owner. The Badge, also, furnishes a positive means for identifying a Member in case of accident to him.

The Badge being a positive means of identification, is to be buried with the Member, and the fact be reported to the Register-General, who will make a proper entry of the same in the National Roll Book, that, in case it should ever, in after ages, be necessary to identify his remains, it can readily be done. If a Badge be lost or found the fact must be immediately reported to the Commanding-General.

THE BADGE ALWAYS THE PROPERTY OF THE ORDER.

Do not forget this, and make it known as generally as possible, that the Badge is the property of the Order forever—whether the one entrusted with it be alive or dead. It is simply loaned to the one whose "Mark" it bears, and can be taken by the Order wherever found. It is loaned to the Member to be worn while living, and to be buried with him at death. For this reason we need no special law passed to prevent others from wearing it, if stolen or found. One cannot sell, give it away or in any manner legally transfer it. The General-Commanding is the custodian of the Badges, and it his duty to protect the Order, not allowing one to remain in the possession of anyone not entitled to the same, if he be notified that it is in unlawful hands.

BADGE OF THE ORDER.

If there had been something in use, during the war, on the same principle as the Badge of the Comrades of the Battlefield, an "Unknown" grave could hardly have existed.

Of the over two thousand soldiers killed at Chickamauga, and buried in the National Cemetery at Chattanooga, all but one hundred and fifty are recorded as "Unknown." Every day, nearly, all over the battlefields of the South, the remains of Union soldiers are being found. Of course they are "unknown;" but if a device similar to this Badge had been in vogue, ALL could be readily identified, no matter when or where found. Again, had the Badge been in use, since the war, it would have been a great help to the families of the fallen.



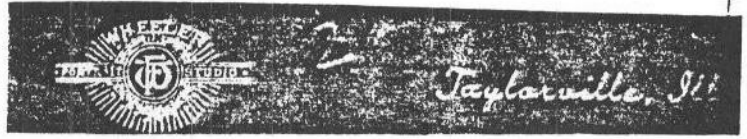
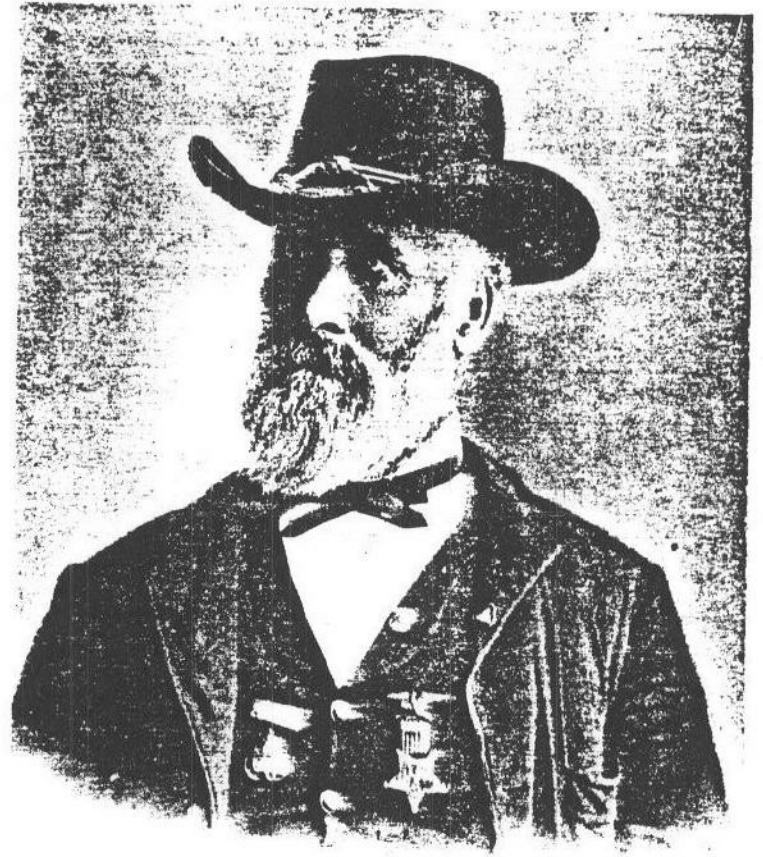
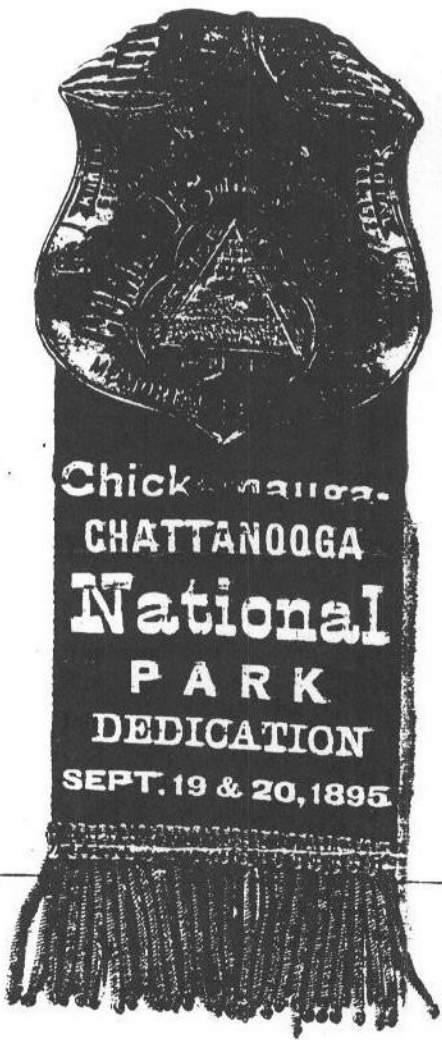
VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS

"Comrades of the Battlefield"

This organization of Northern veterans of the Civil War is completely unknown to most students of the 1861-1865 period. But it was a unique and interesting group! The organization was conceived in September 1887, and apparently grew out of a jest made by George E. Dolton of St. Louis, Missouri. He originally called for the founding of an "Order of Three Months' Men", to include as members those who had served three months or more **under fire**, but the name must also have been a jibe at those whose entire term of service had been three months and who distinguished themselves principally at the meetings of the GAR. In December 1890, Dolton wrote an article stating these views that appeared in the January 1, 1891 issue of the *National Tribune* (a prominent veterans publication of that day). Letters of support were written to Dolton from around the country and in August 1891, those interested in forming such an order met in Detroit, Michigan. A constitution was written, officers elected, and an investigating committee to pass on applicants' qualifications was appointed. George Dalton was elected "General Commanding". Chapters were designated as "Battlefields" and the first, "Chickamauga", was formed in St. Louis on January 30, 1891. In Newbern, Illinois, the members formed the "Vicksburg" Battlefield. There is no information how many other chapters were formed.

Prospective members submitted a fee of \$3.00 along with their application. They were required to provide proof of their combat service. Official reports, diaries, correspondence and other documentary evidence were preferred sources although sworn statements of those who actually saw the applicant under fire were accepted by the investigating committee. The committee verified these records, counted the days under fire, and, if he qualified, approved the new member. Ribbons were made available to the female members of the veteran's family, while the member himself could purchase a certificate recounting his combat days. He also received a badge which was lapel pin made of brass and partially enamelled. It consisted of a trefoil with a triangle set in the center. On the sides of the triangle were the words — "Service" — "Under" — "Fire", and in an oval in the center of the triangle the number of combat days was engraved or stamped.

Very little is known of this veterans' organization. Probably it died with the death of its founder. Dolton died in 1906. He served in Battery "M" 1st Illinois Artillery (Enlisted August 11, 1862 and discharged July 24, 1865). The war apparently had a profound effect on him and like many young men thrust into combat he seemed to be affected by the war experience for the rest of his life. He also was a member of the GAR.



A GAR badge and "Comrades of the Battlefield" badge are both worn proudly in the accompanying photograph of an unidentified member of Taylorville, Illinois. Shown also is a group photograph of the "Vicksburg Battlefield" chapter of the Comrades of the Battlefield of Newbern, Illinois photographed May 30, 1891.

Shown also are the ribbons and badges. Apparently, there were three pieces issued each member. The lapel badge, which was to be buried with the veteran at his death was a red enamelled badge. There was also an aluminum badge, which was to be worn about the neck at all times (something like a "dog tag" of later wars) and a ribbon was of white and red silk. Also shown here is a ribbon worn at the 1895 dedication of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Park.

John F. Powell



Credits Military Order of the Loyal Legion Phila Pa for Rules and Regulations Comrades of the Battlefield and articles

"For those who fell
 on battlefield--
 For those since called
 from line."

