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The Veteran

October - December, 2001

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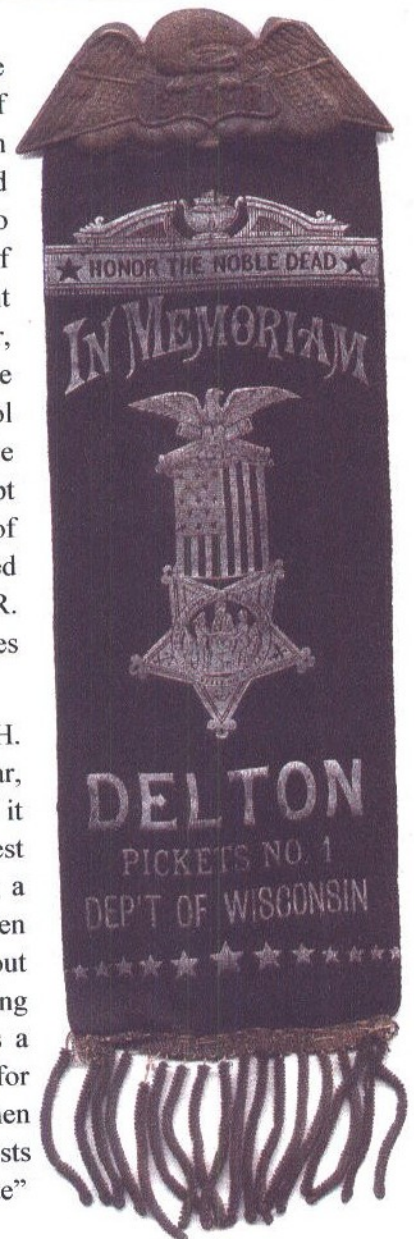
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Picket Posts in the Dept. of Wisconsin
by Tom McCrory

As the "boys in blue" grew older and the Order started to feel the pinch of attrition, the Department of Wisconsin sought alternatives to make the Grand Army of the Republic more accessible to as many veterans as possible. One of these alternatives was to experiment with "picket posts". During the war, picket duty patrolled the edges of the territory under the Union Army's control. Although physically separated from the main body of the Army, the pickets kept in contact using various forms of communication. Picket posts suggested that men could be members of the G.A.R. even if they were living at the extremes of territory covered by an active post.

The issue was not simple. In 1893 J. H. Whitney, the adjutant general that year, told the department encampment that it was fine to accommodate the greatest number of Comrades, but establishing a picket post is warranted only when numbers are sufficient and without inflicting material injury to an existing post. He said that too often there is a "tendency to leave existing posts for insufficient reasons," and it is rare when conditions are right for new posts "except in the northern parts of the state"

(continued on page 4)



The President's Message

By Howard A. Hoffman

In this time of great tragedy, let us remember the heroes of yesterday and today. In the past, they wore blue and grey. Today they wear blue and kelvar. One hundred and forty years ago, they fought to protect their way of life. Last month they charged head long into an inferno to save lives.

Everyday, collectors are reminded of the heroic acts of our forefathers. When we look at those certain pieces in our collections, we see, not an artifact with monetary value, but a relic of a hero who put his body in harms way. Today, let us remember all those heroes, living and dead, who have fought to defend America and our freedoms.

Howard

**Editor's Message
by George G. Kane**

Over the past several issues, I have authored a number of articles on the G.A.R. membership badges. I've discovered a number of amazing facts based on research and observation. I have decided to issue a comprehensive article based on these previous writings. I have limited the scope to the Type III, IV, IVa and V badges. These badges are frequently mismatched. I hope to have the article published in the OMSA Journal, sometime in the future. At that time, I will include the article as a separate addition to the latest *Veteran* shipment. I would appreciate hearing from any member who disagrees or would like to add to my findings. I would like to thank the members who have already sent me information on this topic.

Another of our members has passed away. Elmer Bennett, of Mansfield, Ohio is survived by his wife Linda. We offer our deepest condolences to the Bennett family

Attention Members!!

For the last couple of issues, we have been attaching a membership renewal / new member application to the back of *The Veteran*. Some members were confused by this attachment and mailed in dues even though they had already paid. In the future, you can retrieve a membership application from my web site:

<http://pages.prodigy.net/gkane1/>

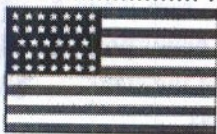
Members without computers can drop me a post card and I'll send you as many as you'd like and I'll pay the postage.

Thanks.

George Kane, Editor

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U.S. Civil War (34 stars)

The Veteran

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Articles may be submitted either in typewritten form or electronically (e-mail or disk) MSWord, or Excel are the preferred software choices. All materials will be returned. If you have questions, please call George Kane at 413-592-2166. Postal and e-mail addresses are listed on the front page.

G.A.R. Membership Badge Variations

by George G. Kane

In the last few issues of *The Veteran*, I have discussed the differences between the G.A.R. membership badges from 1869 - 1956. During the research for these articles, I discovered a few variations in the membership badge, that could not be considered a new type.

The first variation deals with the branch insignias found on the obverse of the star pendant. The insignias are crossed swords, crossed rifles, crossed cannons, an anchor and a bugle. These insignias are located on the arms of the star. On most of the pendants the anchor is at the 8 O'clock position and the crossed cannons are at



Common anchor / cannon positioning

the 4 O'clock position. While checking for differences in the anchor, I noticed that one (out of 70+) of my Type V badges had these two insignias reversed.



Reversed cannon / anchor positioning

The serial number on the edge was P13277. I believe this was manufactured during the 1891-2 administration of Commander in Chief John Palmer. The next "P" commander in chief was not until 1914-5. At that time, I doubt the G.A.R. had 13,277 badges manufactured in any year after 1914. I have other high numbered "P" serial numbered badges, with the correct branch insignia positioning, so I have to believe that this phenomenon is

not found on all badges of that year. The top two branch insignias (crossed sabers and crossed muskets) are also switched.

Another peculiar variation is in the shape of the anchor branch insignia on the obverse. Two variations seem to be apparent. The first is an anchor with a rounded bottom. The size of the shaft, especially where it intersect the arms, is the same width as the arms.



The second type has the anchor arms at a slight angle at the intersection of the shaft. The width of the shaft



seems to expand, the closer it comes to the arms intersection. There seems to be a bump right at the intersection. There is no bump on the rounded version.

This phenomenon appears on the Type IV, IVa and V anchors. I only have seven Type III and none had the rounded bottom version. The rounded anchor seems to be rarer than the angled anchor. On the badges where the anchor is at the 4 O'clock position, the anchors all seem to be rounded.

What does this all mean? To tell you the truth, I don't know. Until I can look at a large number of membership badges and record the results, I doubt that any conclusions can be made. Some people have suggested that when a new die was created, it was done by hand and not all dies were alike. This still doesn't explain the reversed branch positions. At some time in the future, I'll return with my badge census results.

Picket Posts in the Department of Wisconsin

(continued from page 1)

His successor, D. G. Sampson, echoed his sentiments the next year, but was happy to report that "the ice is broken". The idea debated informally for the past two years of "establishing picket out-posts or videttes in sparsely settled districts, too far away from established Posts for Comrades to attend their Post meetings." has materialized. "The 'Delton Pickets,' comprising 28 Comrades and commanded by Comrade J. Freer, have the honor of being the senior organization of this kind in this Department," he told the 1894 encampment. "It is located in Sauk County, is an adjunct of Posts Nos. 49 [A. A. Matthews, LaValle] and 50 [John Gillespie, Wisconsin Dells], and organized in December last." "From this small beginning," beamed the adjutant general, "may it not be hoped that the large numbers of Veterans who yet remain outside of our order, by reason of their great distance from any Post, may now be brought into comradeship of the order?" Sampson urged: "Let this Department be the first in this movement, as it has in all others in which the welfare of the Veterans has been sought."

The Encampment ordered a committee of three to study the picket post idea and to report to the 1895 encampment. If the Comrades in that Encampment were expecting great things to come from this report, they were sadly disappointed the next year. The committee, chaired by James E. Jones of Gillespie Post 50, put little effort into studying the concept, and when it was time to report to the 1895 encampment, Jones was anything but enthusiastic. "The only experiment in that line I know of in the Department is within our Post, and while as a local arrangement it might accommodate some country Comrades, it would unnecessarily and seriously complicate the Department if it should become officially recognized. The tendency of that would be the institution of Picket Posts by disgruntled factions who could not get a charter for a new Post in the G.A.R., and the existence of organizations within the order, not constitutional or in the interest of the fundamental principles. Once adopted, it would obtain a dangerous and insidious influence that would weaken the existing structure and encourage dissension and partitions in the

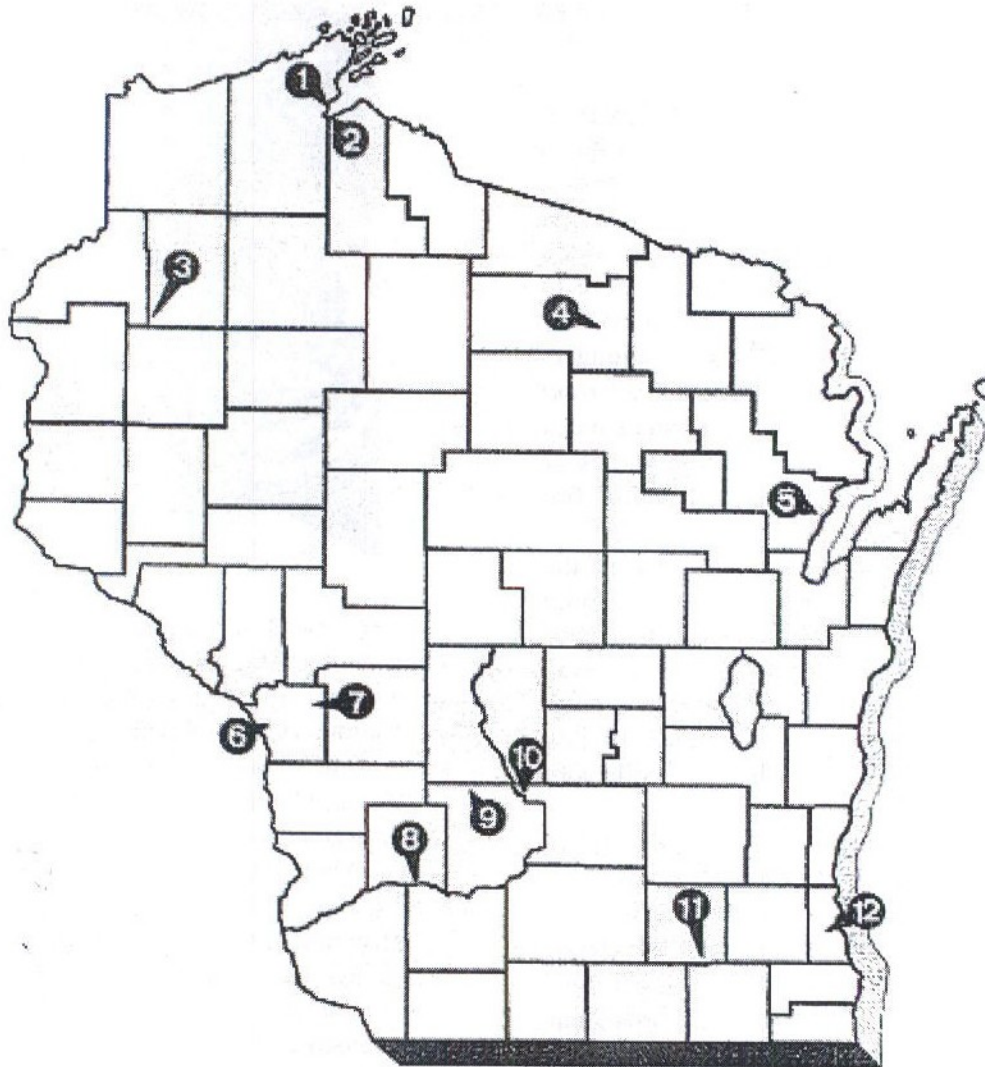
common family. There are a few favorable points toward permitting Picket Posts, it is true, but all are of local character and could not apply generally." Jones would consider such posts in a few circumstances, but only if they were under the strict control of the sponsoring post and subject to disbandment by that post. It would be unwise, he concluded "for the Department to take any official cognizance of local Picket Posts except to tacitly and uncompromisingly leave the matter to the discretion and privilege of individual Posts."

Because it was generally understood that picket posts would be outside the normal organization of the Grand Army of the Republic, the subject thereafter was not often broached at the annual encampments and thus the fate of picket posts is not well documented. Nonetheless, it is clear that Comrade Jones's admonitions, while having some effect, did not put the matter to rest. In fact, State Commander E. B. Gray, a perennial leader in Department of Wisconsin affairs, spoke with some pride in his commander's address in 1898 about the status of picket posts. "Pickets have been established in several localities and are becoming a feature of this Department." Although the Department did not have full knowledge of where and how they were organized, they knew of fourteen or fifteen of the outposts. He listed nine posts as sponsoring posts (and interestingly did not mention the LaValle or Wisconsin Dells Posts among them.) Unfortunately, the commander's report did not mention locations of the picket posts, except in three instances: Iron River, offspring of the post at Washburn; Spooner, the outpost of Shell Lake; and Eagle, an offshoot of Palmyra (Gray's home post.). These three plus Delton are the only recorded locations of picket posts. The picket post at Eagle, the commander was happy to relate, had even arranged to hold Memorial services at Eagle, "and the fifteen members of that Picket have invited the parent Post to join them in observing the day, which invitation has been accepted."

The records are sparse on picket posts thereafter. At least one picket post was added a couple years after Gray's enthusiastic report. In 1900, members of Rank and File Post 240, Milwaukee, sponsored such an adjunct at Muskego. It was established on July 29 when former Wisconsin Dept. Commander Henry Fischer enrolled the twenty-one members. Rank and File's

minutes show that the post and its offspring got together from time to time, and as late as 1908, held a joint Memorial Day program at Muskego.

Still picket posts remain a mystery. Even their locations were not important enough for the Department to have recorded. There are no references to them in Encampment Journals after 1898. The sponsoring posts, at least those that are known, are located on the map below. It illustrates that the picket post concept was tried in a wide variety of places and circumstances..



- (1) Washburn Post with picket post at Iron River.
- (2) Ashland Post with two picket posts, locations unknown.
- (3) Shell Lake Post with picket post at Spooner.
- (4) Rhinelander Post with three picket posts, locations unknown.
- (5) Oconto Post with two picket posts, locations unknown.
- (6) La Crosse Post with two picket posts, locations unknown.
- (7) Bangor Post, with one picket post, location unknown.
- (8) Sextonville Post, with two picket posts, locations unknown.
- (9) LaValle Post and (10) Wisconsin Dells Post, shared picket post at Deilton.
- (11) Palmyra Post, one picket post at Eagle.
- (12) Rank and File Post, Milwaukee, with one picket post at Muskego

Union Veterans' Union

by George G. Kane

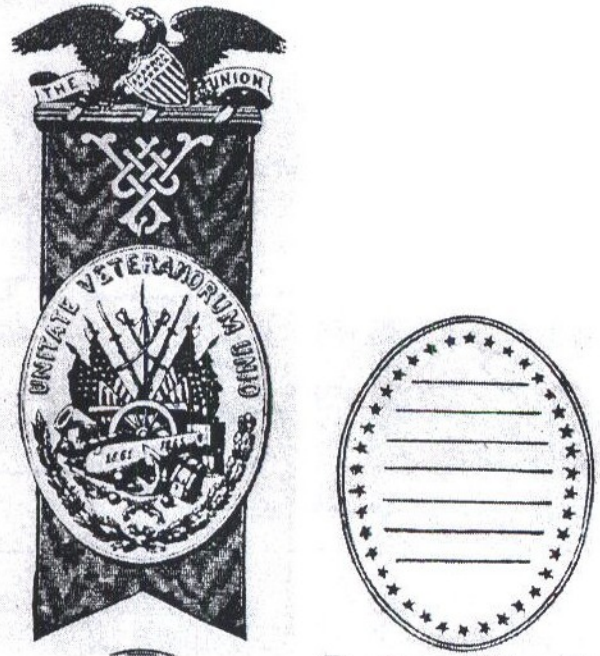
In its attempts to recruit new members, the G. A. R. had two main rivals in the late 19th Century. The Union Veteran Legion (UVL) and the Union Veterans' Union (UVU) had membership requirements that far exceeded the G.A.R.'s

Although not as stringent as the UVL, the UVU service requirements attempted to keep the ninety day veteran from its ranks. The UVU required six months service, some of which *must* be at the front. The veteran would also have to had received an honorable discharge. Men who were discharged due to wounds, did not have to meet the time restriction. The UVU was organized June 18, 1886 in Washington, DC. Soon after it was founded, it's first Commander in Chief was quoted in the *Grand Army Record* of April 1887, "Into our ranks, no man can come who has not heard the zip, zip of the minies or dodged the screaming shell; he must be baptized by fire before he can pass our sacred precincts."

The UVU never reached the membership totals of the GAR or the UVL. Leaders of the society kept these totals secret, so that their few numbers did not deter their political lobbying. In later years, the UVU was found almost exclusively in the Northeast with a large following in Maine. Very few records remain of this society and their regalia rarely reaches the collectors market.

There seems to have been two UVU's. The first UVU was organized in New York in 1879 with General U. S. Grant as its chairman. This UVU appears to have been an offshoot of the "Boys in Blue", a popular veteran political society, with ties to the "Radical Republicans" headed by the former G.A.R. Commander in Chief John A. Logan. Logan was the vice-presidential candidate on the James G. Blaine presidential ticket of 1884. In 1879, The first UVU contracted with A. Demarist, manufacturer of the Type III G.A.R. membership badge, to produce a UVU membership badge. The badge was made of copper bronze. There was no mention of "captured cannon". The hanger is an eagle, its wings spread and a US shield leaning on its chest. The eagle sits on a fasces and a banderole inscribed "The Union". Below the fasces is a monogram with the initials UVU. The "V" of the monogram is larger than the other initials. The two "U"'s are intertwined at opposite angles. Attached to the monogram is a medal which is more oval than round. The central engraving is that of a

montage of flags, swords, rifles, cannons, an anchor and wreaths of oak (strength). Around the top of the medal is the slogan in Latin "*Unitate Veteranorum Unio*" which translates "*by the Union of the Veterans, the Union*". A wreath of laurel (victory) surrounds the bottom of the medal



The reverse of the medal is surrounded by stars representing the states and territories. The reverse is lined and left blank for the veteran's personal inscription. Attached to the hanger is a silk ribbon. The color of the ribbon was dependent on the owners branch of service; blue for infantry; red for artillery; yellow for cavalry; green for the medical corps or tri-color for the navy. These badges could be purchased through the local UVU "clubs". The price in 1879 was \$1.00 and one cent per letter for any inscription. Demarist had been led to believe that the association had 260,000 members, which enabled him "to fix the cost at an extremely low figure".

It's extremely doubtful that the UVU organized in Washington in 1886 was, in any way, connected to the UVU founded in New York in 1879. The second UVU was a powerful lobby for veteran pensions, work preference laws, and widow and orphan benefits. It believed that pensions should be paid, *per diem*, that is, by length of service. This contrasted to the G.A.R. attempts to foster universal pension payments, where all veterans received the



UVU Club Ribbon

same compensation. Along with the UVL, the UVU frequently clashed with the G.A.R., especially in the 1890's when pension fraud and reform were a hot topic of discussion. The UVU and UVL believed that disability pensions for veterans should only be paid to veterans who incurred their disabilities on the field of battle.

The UVU membership badge has two varieties of the same design. The first has typical three dimensional relief, while the second variety is flat and two dimensional.



3-D

2-D

You'll notice that the swords on the hanger of the 3-D variety have scabbards with drags, while the 2-D variety has no scabbards. Both badges have a Red (artillery), Yellow (cavalry) and Blue (infantry) ribbon. The ribbons on the two varieties are connected differently. The 3-D badge has upper and lower ribbon bars. The top ribbon bar is attached to the two sword handles and the lower bar to the two rifle muzzles on the pendant. The 2-D badge has an upper ribbon bar attached higher on the back of the hanger just below the pin. The ribbon is attached to the pendant with an eyehole at the top of the pendant.

Besides the two swords, the hanger has the round UVU logo with a single star, the letters "UVU" and the dates "1861" and "1865". The pendant is a circle with eight small arms. Two crossed muskets extend beyond the circle. There are two crossed cannons, an anchor and the words "Union Veteran Union" on the pendant. No makers mark was applied to the blank pendant back or the hanger.

A lapel pin consisted of the round UVU logo with red, yellow and blue enamel and silver letters and numbers.



The UVU local units were called a "Command". I've never seen officer badges for a Command, but individual command identity and *In Memoriam* badges exist:

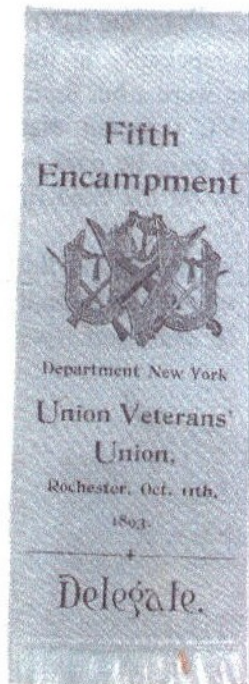


The UVU differed from the UVL in its organization which was similar to the GAR. The UVU commands were chartered by the UVU department rather than a national office. All UVL encampments were chartered directly by the national organization. The UVU departments held encampments and elected delegates to the National encampments. National encampments of the UVU were not always held at large metropolitan locations. Lima, OH (1895), Rock Island, IL (1898) and Auburn, ME (1909) were a few of the smaller city national encampments. Larger cities such as Atlantic

(continued on page 8)

**Union Veterans' Union
(continued from page 7)**

City (1910), Minneapolis (1906) and Louisville (1903) hosted the UVU National Encampments.



UVU department encampment badges are more likely to be ribbons than metal. UVU ribbons for the Department of New York seem to be the most plentiful with various colored ribbons for different department officers and delegates.

The picture below is of a Maine UVU command. The photographer is Washburne and the veterans are posing in front of an Odd Fellows Hall. If anyone knows the location of this photo please contact the editor. Thanks.



Courtesy of Marius Peladeau (277)

GAR Dyslexia

by George G. Kane

About five years ago, a cache of G.A.R. memorabilia was discovered in a cellar in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Everything in the cellar was from Kilpatrick Post 71, G.A.R., Holyoke, Mass. The two badges shown here are from that discovery. You'll notice that the post number on the first badge is 17

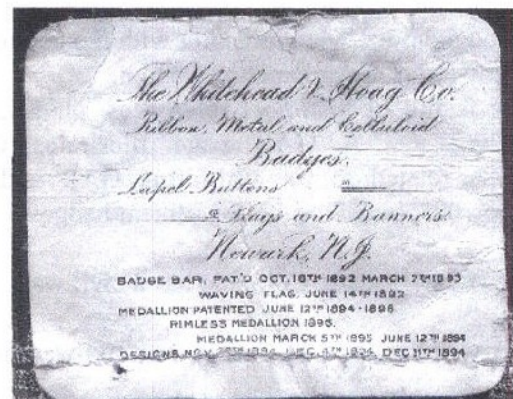


Kilpatrick Post No. 71 was chartered by the Department of Massachusetts on November 25, 1868. The post died with the last member on November 17, 1933. No other post was chartered in Holyoke, Mass. The General Sedgwick Post (1867-1942) of Orange, Mass. was the only Dept. of Mass. post to carry the number 17. So why the 17 on this badge? This was

probably a sample prepared by the maker. A correct badge is shown below.



The manufacturer of both badges was Whitehead and Hoag. The company would probably not have appreciated the fact that the post kept the incorrect badge, especially with their paper marker on the back.



Veterans in Cyberspace

by George G. Kane

I recently discovered a very interesting California GAR web site on the internet:

<http://members.home.net/reunion/index.htm>

The site is entitled "The Second Mass and Its Fighting Californians" and is hosted by Reunion Civil War Antiques. In 1862, the state of Massachusetts, at the request of a group of ex-patriot east coast men, recruited 5 companies ("A", "E", "F", "L" and "M") of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry in San Francisco. The

Cavalry Company for the East.



THE UNDERSIGNED HAS BEEN authorized by the Secretary of War to raise a company of Cavalry for service in the East to make part of the Massachusetts quota.

A Roll of the company is at Assembly Hall, corner of Post and Kearny Streets, where persons desirous of joining can enroll their names.

No one need apply who is not a good horseman and in good health. Men from the country preferred. The Roll will be kept open a reasonable time before selections are made.

All expenses will be paid as soon as accepted.

Further particulars apply to Office, corner Post and Kearny street.

cc28 - 2pt

J. SEWALL REED.

1862 San Francisco Newspaper Advertisement

men agreed to pay for their own uniforms, equipment and transportation to the Bay State. Company "A" became known as the "California 100" and the 5 companies as the "California Battalion". The regiment fought throughout the war climaxing with the capture of Lee's supply trains at Appomattox Station.

The site is full of historical references, photos, and memorabilia.

A GAR page illustrates GAR memorabilia related to the California GAR and the "California 100", including 12 department badges.

Another western state, Colorado has a civil war site:

<http://www.archives.state.co.us/civwar/civilwar.html>

The site recounts Colorado Territory's participation in the civil war. Although 4,000 men were eventually raised to fight the Confederacy, few saw any action.

Most were used to fight Indians or stand guard duty in Kansas or Missouri. Colorado troops were used to beat



back Confederate expansion goals in New Mexico. The most famous use of Colorado troops was at the Sand Creek Massacre, where the Colorado 3rd Cavalry earned the nickname the "Bloody Third" for its slaughter of men, woman and children at Black Kettle's Cheyenne Indian camp. The site provides histories of its six regiments and a list of its civil war casualties.

If you had an ancestor in the civil war who fought for a West Virginia Union regiment, you may be able to claim his West Virginia state civil war medal. The state archives website instructs you on who is eligible, how and where to apply. Their web site is:

<http://www.wvculture.org/history/medals.html>

A list of 4,000 unclaimed medals is arraigned alphabetically by last name, first name, company and regiment. The unclaimed medals are stored in the small cardboard boxes in which they arrived from A. Demarest of New York in 1867. Each soldier's name and unit of service is written on the outside of the box in longhand. The medals were struck in three different classes:

- *Class I:* For officers and soldiers in the volunteer army who were honorably discharged;
- *Class II:* For officers and soldiers who were killed in battle;
- *Class III:* For officers and soldiers who died of wounds or diseases contracted in the service.

Each medal is bronze-covered copper and bears the name and regiment of the veteran on the milled edge.

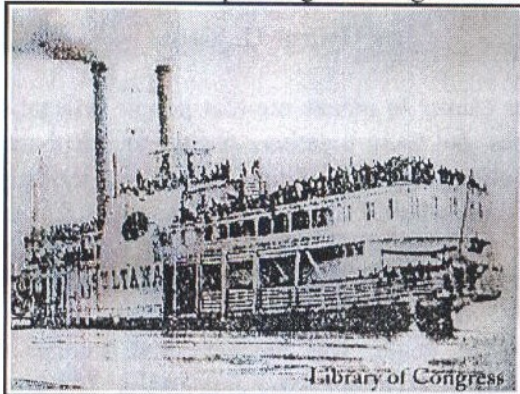


West Virginia Civil War Medals

Sultana Association To Donate Historic Memorial

by Richard E. Troup

The Sultana Association of Descendants and Friends is donating a monument plaque to the City of Mansfield on November 10, 2001 at 2:00pm at South Park in Mansfield, Ohio. The plaque is in memory of the 73 men of the 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry who perished when the steamship exploded, the most casualties of any regiment aboard the ship. The marker reads as follows: *"In Memory of the 73 men of the 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry who died as a result of the steamship "Sultana" blowing up on April 27, 1865 while returning 2,400 prisoners of war, on the Mississippi River. The result was the loss of over 1,800, the greatest maritime disaster in US history. The 102nd Regiment was formed in Mansfield, Ohio and mustered in on September 6, 1862. This regiment lost the most men of any infantry regiment on the ship as a result of the disaster."* The names of the men are listed by Company. A drawing of the ship on the monument was made from the only photo taken of the vessel, with passengers lining all decks.



The *Sultana* was a sidewheel steamship and was used to transport soldiers during the Civil War. The 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry was organized in Mansfield, Ohio with area men from Richland, Ashland, Wayne and Holmes Counties in August, 1862. In the battle of Athens, Alabama, the regiment was surrounded by Confederate troops under the command of General Nathan Bedford Forrest and eventually surrendered. The enlisted men were taken to Cahaba Prison and suffered many hardships including poor food, lack of sanitation and periodic flooding of the prison. At the end of the war, they were released to return home and boarded the *Sultana*. The ship was equipped with boilers which were heated to produce steam to power the paddlewheels on each side of the ship. One of the boilers had a leak and was subsequently patched. This

proved to be inadequate as events later showed. The ship's capacity was 400 passengers, but over 2,400 were placed on board, including some civilians which greatly overloaded the boat.

On April 27, 1865 the boiler exploded and the wooden ship caught fire. Passengers and crew faced the horror of being burned alive or jumping into the cold floodwaters of the Mississippi River. Many of the men were weak from prison life and could not swim. Over 1800 perished in the disaster, 300 more than the loss of life suffered by the *RMS Titanic* in 1912.

The story of the *Sultana* has gone mostly untold, overshadowed by the assassination of President Lincoln. There is no national monument to the victims of this tragedy. Their remains lie at the bottom of the river or in unmarked graves in Memphis, Tennessee.

The main purpose of the Sultana Association is to publicize the disaster and build monuments to their memory. It's hoped that the publicity of this dedication will make relatives of these victims more aware of their sacrifice.

South Park is located about two miles west of the downtown Central Park on Park Ave. West. Turn right on Brinkerhoff Ave. to enter the park. If you plan on attending, please contact Richard Troup at 235 Poplar Drive, McConnelsville, OH 43756-1042 or e-mail at ww2057@dragonbbs.com. A fine ceremony is planned, with veterans, reenactors and relatives. The Sultana Association would like to thank George Finlayson, past president of the CWVHA for his help with this project.

GAR Hat Wreath

by Jeff Dygert

I would be interested in hearing from any member who has any knowledge of the GAR hat wreath presented below. I'm particularly interested in the manufacturer / supplier, time frame, or specific Departments/Posts that used these. The wreath is typical of GAR hat wreaths, but the lettering is unusual in style and size. Thanks. jeffd4@mindspring.com, or POB 2151, Bothell, WA 98041



The Kansas GAR Superdome Revisited

by George G. Kane

In the Oct.-Dec., 2000 issue of *The Veteran*, an article on the GAR superdome illustrated the building and completion of this structure. The article stated that an encampment was held in the dome in 1889. Since that article, the following memorabilia from that event has surfaced.

The obverse of the medal has printed on the edge: "SIXTH ANNUAL RE-UNION, GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC, 1889". The center of the obverse has a GAR membership badge with the words "DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS" flanking the badge. Underneath the badge in a scroll is "ELLSWORTH KANSAS" and under the scroll is "OCTOBER 1st TO 5th".



(200%)

Reunions were often held by the GAR Departments in the fall. They were strictly a social event and no department business was transacted at these reunions.

The reverse of the badge has "THE FIRST RE-UNION EVER HELD ON GROUNDS OWNED BY THE GAR", encircling the edge of the medal. In the center the following words are found:

SOUVENIR
of the
DEDICATION
of the

REUNION GROUNDS
DONATED BY THE
City of Ellsworth
to the G.A.R. of
KANSAS



Fakes and Fantasies

by George G. Kane

It never ceases to amaze me that people will take any two pieces, put them together, and try to sell them as a unique collectible. This Zippo lighter was recently put up for bid on e-Bay. It was described as a 1971 Grand Army of the Republic GAR Zippo, by a Pennsylvania dealer. It's remarkable what the top half of a GAR lapel pin, a 1971 Zippo lighter and some superglue will do. Evidently the dealer was unaware that the last GAR member had died fifteen years previously. The lot, with a first bid of \$49.99, received no bids.

