

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

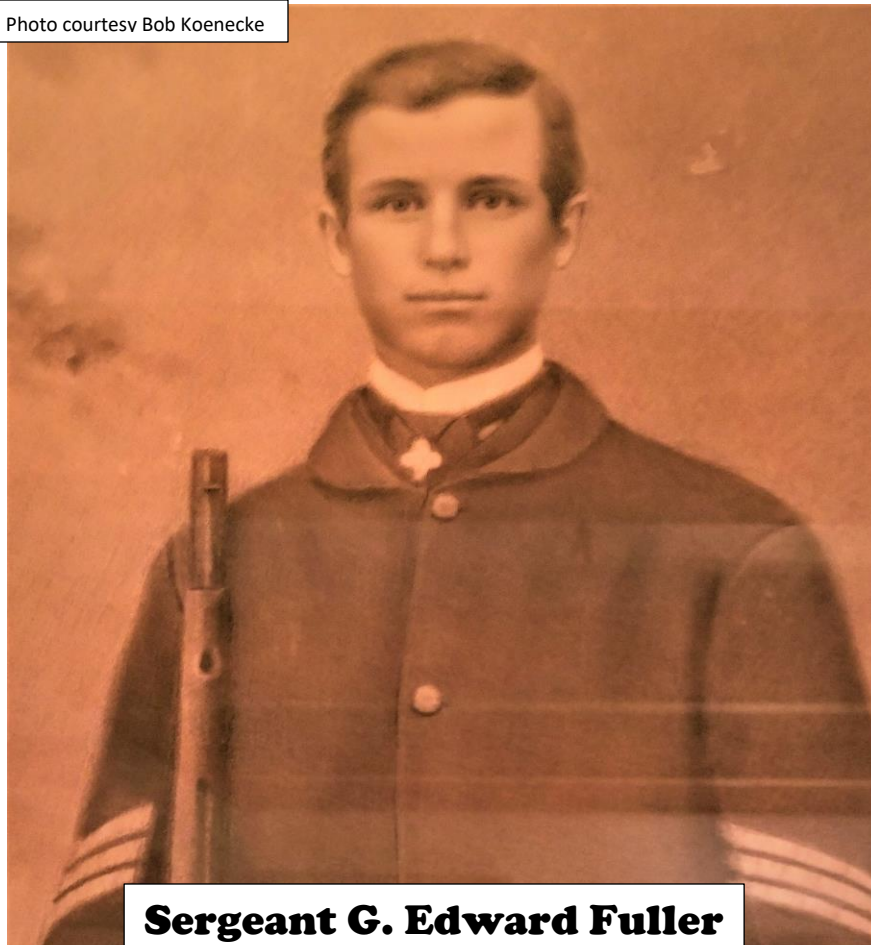
COL. HANS C. HEG CAMP #15

WIND LAKE, WIS.

MARCH 2021

Winner of the Abraham Lincoln Commander-in-Chief Award – Best Camp in the Country

Photo courtesy Bob Koenecke



Sergeant G. Edward Fuller

**A Hero of
Gettysburg
in Camp
#15's Back
Yard**

**Brother Bob
Koenecke's
Letters from
First Minnesota
Sergeant Who
Survived Battle**

G. Edward Fuller, one of the First Minnesota Infantry soldiers making the famous charge that saved the Union line at Gettysburg, lives on in letters kept in an old trunk in the home of Camp #15's Bob Koenecke. Dead now for close to a hundred years, Fuller comes alive in the letters saved by a great-aunt of Brother Bob's - letters and a sepia-tinted chalk drawing of Fuller (above) that have now passed on to Bob.

The story of G. Edward Fuller's life is an amazing one. The son of well-to-do parents in Michigan, Edward - the name he preferred - ran off from home at the age of 15, traveled across Wisconsin to Minnesota - then on the country's western frontier - and enlisted in April 1861 under the alias "Edward L. Wood" in the First Minnesota In- *(continued on next page)*

fantry. There was a reason young Edward used an alias and claimed to be 18 when he signed up - no regiment would knowingly muster in a boy 15 years old. Presumably, Edward also wanted to make it difficult for his prominent father, a one-time banker and well-known businessman in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area, to find him if he tried to track him down.

The research so far shows that G. Edward Fuller likely made his way west across Wisconsin to the Mississippi River, then traveled north up the river to the port city of Hastings, Minn., just a few miles south of St. Paul, Minn. Hastings was a center for Civil War recruitment, "teeming with young men who arrived there by river and rail," one story on the First Minnesota says. Young Edward enlisted on April 29, 1861 and was assigned to Co. H.

Two years into the war, in July 1863, Edward Fuller and his Co. H marched onto Cemetery Ridge just south of a little town called Gettysburg in southeastern Pennsylvania. Edward's company, one hundred men strong at the start of the war, was down to just twenty soldiers, decimated by bloody battles at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.

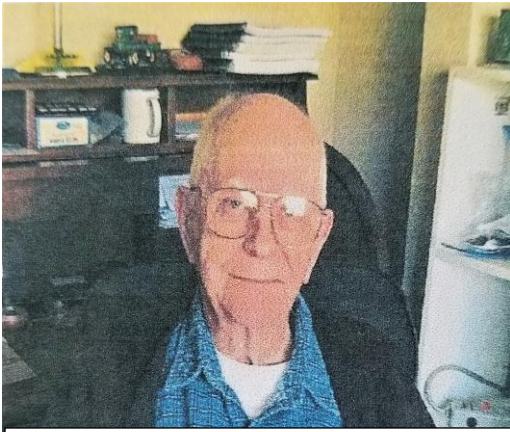
Across a shallow valley from the First Minnesota was Gen. Robert E. Lee's army, stretched along Seminary Ridge. On the second day of the battle, close to two-thousand Rebels were coming at a trot toward a gap in the center of the Union lines. Panicked Union troops were fleeing to the rear - but one Union regiment stood fast, the 262 men of the First Minnesota.

Desperate, Union Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock needed five minutes to bring up reinforcements to plug the gap. "Charge those lines!" Hancock barked. To a man, the 262 men in the First Minnesota charged - and in twenty-three minutes of fighting were *(continued on page 4)*



Painting by Don Troiani. Picture courtesy of Minnesota State Capitol Building.

The famous charge of the First Minnesota Infantry on the second day of the battle of Gettysburg. The First Minnesota, with 262 men, lost 215 men dead or wounded in the charge, a casualty rate of 82 percent, the highest casualty rate of any Union regiment in the Civil War.



Robert N. "Bob" Halsted

Bob Halsted's resume is a testament to his patriotism and duty to country. Bob served in the U.S. Navy, the Army Air Force and then the U.S. Air Force. After retiring from the military, Bob worked as a civilian in the U.S. Army's aviation systems command until his final retirement in 1982.

The list of military bases where Bob served is long: North West Air Force Base, Guam; Howard AF Base, Panama; Ladd AF Base, Fairbanks, Alaska; Great Lakes Naval Base north of Chicago. And on the USS Oregon City in Calif. Thank you for your service, Bob.

Col. Hans C. Heg's Great-Great Nephew Remembers Heg and Heg Family

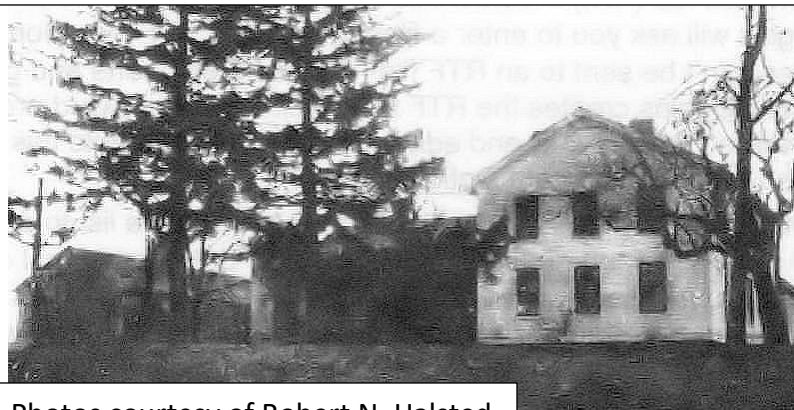
Col. Hans C. Heg's great-great nephew, Robert N. "Bob" Halsted, takes great pride in keeping alive the memory of his Civil War ancestor and the Heg and Halsted families. Bob, now 93, lives in a retirement home in Monroe, Wis.

Bob's great-grandmother, Sophia Heg Halsted, was a sister to Col. Heg and lived with Heg's wife Gunild and the Heg family in their Waterford, Wis., home while Heg was off to the war.

Bob says that the large barn on the farm owned by Heg's father, Even Heg, in Wind Lake, Wis., was a center for the Norwegian community in that part of Wisconsin, serving as a home for newly-arriving immigrants from Norway, as a church and even as a hospital during a cholera epidemic in the 1840s.

The original cornerstone of the barn now stands on the front lawn of the home at 7826 S. Loomis in Wind Lake. There is also a plaque inside the Waterford Library noting where Heg's Waterford home once stood, Bob says.

The Even Heg farm in Wind Lake, Wis., where Hans C. Heg grew up. The farm was across from what is now Kelly's Bleachers.



Photos courtesy of Robert N. Halsted

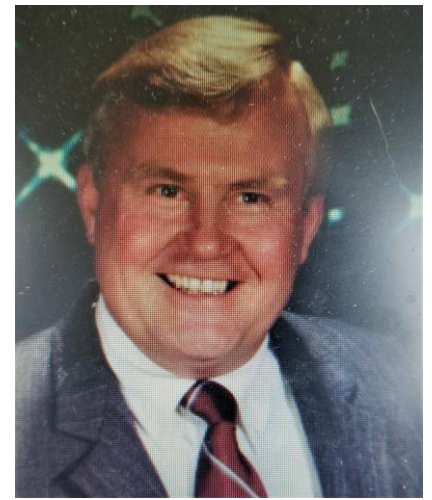


The Heg tavern near Lier, Norway. Col. Hans C. Heg's father, Even Heg, was an innkeeper before the family emigrated to U.S. in 1840.

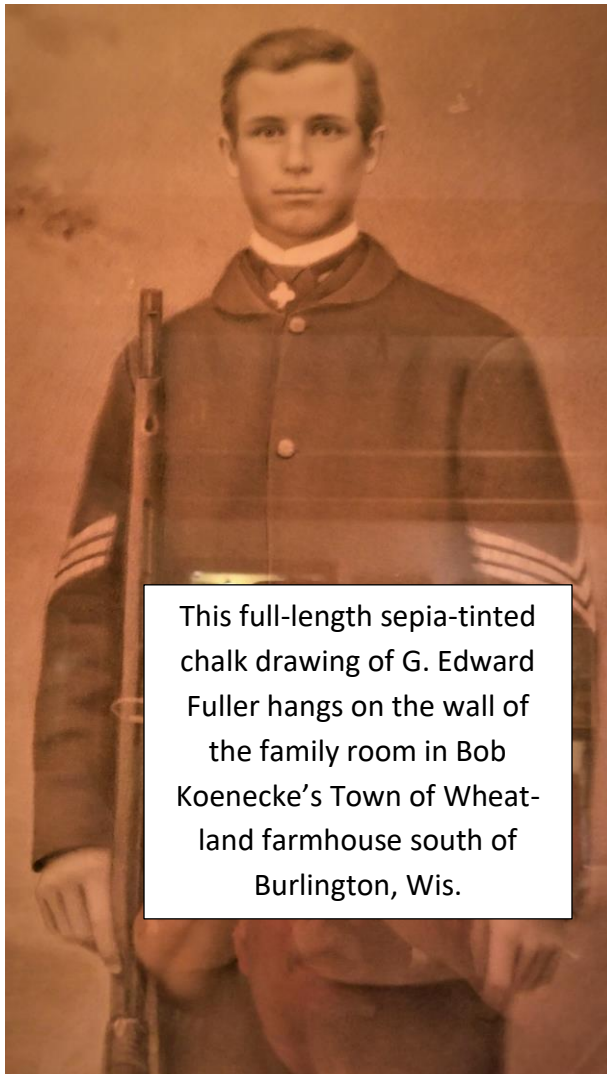
We Say Goodbye to Our Bob Johnson

Brother Bob Johnson, a colorful member of Camp #15 and lifelong resident of southeastern Wisconsin, passed away January 28th this year at the age of 83. Bob was the guy who made everyone smile at camp meetings with his impish humor and off-the-cuff remarks on anything that struck his fancy, especially his neighbor's squirrels. Ramblings by Bob, one wit called them.

A resident of Wind Lake, Wis., Bob is survived by his wife, Louise Ann, and four children. Bob held degrees from UW Milwaukee and Marquette University. For three decades or more, Bob served as an educator in the Milwaukee area, finishing his career in 1994 as principal of Townsend Elementary School. Bob never forgot to send fellow Camp #15 member and Vietnam veteran Dave Daley a much appreciated thank you card on Veterans Day. Godspeed, Brother Bob - we miss you.



Robert T. "Bob" Johnson



This full-length sepia-tinted chalk drawing of G. Edward Fuller hangs on the wall of the family room in Bob Koenecke's Town of Wheatland farmhouse south of Burlington, Wis.

(continued from page two) shot to pieces. After the charge, 215 soldiers in the First Minnesota lay scattered across the field, dead or wounded. But they had stopped the Rebels long enough for Union reinforcements to come up. The First Minnesota had saved the day - and likely the battle, too.

In the charge, Co. H was on the far left of the regiment's battleline. Six Co. H men died in the charge and Corporal Fuller was wounded but able to soldier on. He was promoted on the spot to sergeant.

After the war, G. Edward Fuller married and went on to a long career as a coffee, tea and spices merchant in Chicago. In 1893 he served as a top food expert at the World's Fair in Chicago and in 1901 was an executive at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. G. Edward Fuller died in 1928, age 83, in Evanston, Illinois where his granddaughter, Anna C. Fuller, was teaching school and living with another schoolteacher, Edna Schulze, a great-aunt to Bob Koenecke. In time, Fuller's letters and portrait passed on to Bob Koenecke - and are now among Brother Bob's most prized possessions.