



"Keep green in our minds the memory of those who sacrificed so much that the life of the nation might be preserved ...." This line from the chaplain's script resonates with all of us at each meeting.

C. K. PIER BADGER CAMP # 1

SUVCW



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### SERIES 2015 **CAMP ORDERS** MARCH 2015

TWO-TIME RECIPIENT OF THE MARSHALL HOPE NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

#### THE VETERAN WHOSE WORK WE CARRY OUT TODAY

The 120th anniversary of the death of Colwert Kendall Pier will come on April 14. He died in 1895 at the age of 53, and is buried in the Pier Cemetery on Pioneer Road in his home of Fond du Lac.

Three members of our Camp list Pier as their ancestor: Carl Liebert and William Liebert of Rhinelander, and M. Hans Liebert of New York City. Carl is age 87 and proudly reports he is a great-grandson of Pier; the others are Carl's sons. Other Camp members, notably PDC Tom Brown, are on Pier's family tree but use other soldiers as their relative of record.

In our noble work in C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1, all of us are his brothers. So let's refresh our memories about Pier's two rounds of heroic service as a soldier and as a patriotic veteran during and after the war. Our Camp bylaws have one of the best accounts that I have seen, so here is

#### FROM THE COMMANDER — TOM MUELLER

a lightly edited version of that biography:



Pvt. Colwert Pier in the 1st Wisconsin (3 months).

Immediately after the fall of Fort Sumter, at the age of 19, Pier (pronounced "pyre") enlisted as a private in Company I, 1st Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the first man to enlist in Fond du Lac County. He fought in the Battle of Falling Waters in what is now West Virginia before being discharged from the three-month unit in August 1861.

Back at home, in 1863 Pier organized an infantry company and was elected captain. Afterwards, he organized nine other companies into the 2nd Regiment State Militia and was commissioned a colonel by the governor.

When the 36th, 37th and 38th Wisconsin Infantry Regiments were mustered into federal service in 1864, C.K. Pier accepted a commission as lieutenant

*Continued on page 4*

#### SPRING SEASON IS HERE

Our next meeting is at 7 p.m. April 1 at the Machinists Union hall at 1650 S. 38th St., Milwaukee. We will plan the spring season, and CC Tom Mueller will have the patriotic presentation about a noteworthy Pennsylvania sergeant in the last week of the war and a little-known Wisconsin private at Appomattox.

The Cushing weekend events in Delafield are shaping up. There will be a two-day living-history encampment on Saturday and Sunday, May 23 and 24. On the 24th, Cushing Park – which honors Medal of Honor recipient Alonzo Cushing and his three brothers – will be rededicated with a parade and ceremony including SUVCW Brothers from several Camps, of course featuring Cushing's Battery. The original dedication was on Memorial Day of 1915.



*These monthly articles about our Camp namesake are written by PCinC Steve Michaels. This first was published in the March 2005*

#### **Camp Orders.**

On April 2, 1865, U.S. Grant ordered a general assault along the entire line before Petersburg, Va.

The rebel lines had been stretched and originally terminated at a large defensive work named "Fort Mahone," which faced its Union counterpart, "Fort Sedgewick." The two forts hammered each other continuously, tossing mortar shells so often that wandering around exposed inside their walls was a potentially fatal mistake. Both sides quickly named Fort Mahone "Fort Damnation" and Fort Sedgewick "Fort Hell."

The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, made up of five regiments, was assigned to the assault of Fort Mahone. It rendezvoused at Fort Sedgewick, and formed into three lines. The 109<sup>th</sup> New York and two companies of the 38<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin under Lt. Col. Pier formed the second line of the assaulting column. At dawn, the Union forces emerged under a rain of enemy bullets.

Pier gallantly led his troops in the assault, and by his influence did much to inspire the men with the steadiness and bravery shown that day. His troops pushed over the picket line, over the rebel works, tearing away two lines of *chevaux de frize*, a formidable line of abatis, into the ditch, up the embankment and into the fort. There they found the rebels hurriedly vacating.

Rebel artillery in the surrounding works kept up fire all day, and the fort's Union occupants replied in kind. The Confederates made six different assaults during the day trying to recover the lost works, but were repulsed every time, and the victors spent the night in the captured works. They awoke the next morning to find the enemy had abandoned the entire line and was fleeing to the southwest. April 2, 1865, marked the de facto death of Robert E. Lee's weakened army and the country it sustained.

Pier's conduct was such to win the heartiest of high praise, from both officers and men of the 109<sup>th</sup>.

*From Battlefields & Camp Fires of the 38<sup>th</sup> Wis. Vols. by Lt. S.W. Pierce, Daily Wis. Printing House, Milwaukee, 1866; Military History of Wisconsin by E.B. Quiner, Madison, 1866; and Siege Warfare Before Petersburg by George V. Goebel.*

### **REMEMBERING COL. PIER: TAKING 'FORT DAMNATION'**



A well-disguised Union picket line is shown facing Fort Mahone in this sketch.



## THE WITNESSES AT APPOMATTOX



*For his patriotic presentation at the March meeting, SVC Jeff Lesar reported on the historic meeting of U.S. Grant and Robert E. Lee at Appomattox 150 years ago next month. There were 16 people in the room. Here is what happened to some of the other officers, gathered from an article in the 2015 Old Farmer's Almanac by Tim Clark and various history websites.*

Lt. Col. Horace Porter, who had earned the Medal of Honor at Chickamauga, was U.S. ambassador to France from 1897 to 1905. He spent six years searching in Paris for the lost grave of Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones, eventually succeeding in 1905. President Theodore Roosevelt sent four Navy warships to bring the body home, and Porter received the unanimous thanks of Congress.

The father of the U.S. Navy had lived in Paris since 1790, and died of intestinal nephritis in his apartment there on July 18, 1792. He was buried at a cemetery that belonged to the French royal family, and four years later, France's revolutionary government sold the land and the cemetery was forgotten.

On April 24, 1906, Jones was laid to rest in Bancroft Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. Five years later, Jones was re-interred in a bronze and marble sarcophagus at the Naval Academy Chapel. Porter died in 1921.

– Brig. Gen. Orville E. Babcock became private secretary to President Grant. In 1875, he was indicted by a St. Louis grand jury in a scandal known as the Whiskey Ring, but was acquitted. Grant filed a deposition in his defense. He later faced a second corruption case but also was acquitted. He drowned in a boating accident in Florida in 1884.

– Maj. Gen. Phillip H. Sheridan, commander of Union cavalry at the end of the war, got more tough assignments. Grant sent him to the Southwest to restore Texas and Louisiana to Union control and help Mexican leader Benito Juarez get rid of a French occupying army. Then Sheridan was sent to confront the Plains Indians, which he achieved using the same scorched-earth tactics that he had employed against the Confederates.

Although he was reputed to have said “the only good Indian is a dead Indian,” he denied it all his life. In 1878 he said: “We took away their country and their means of support, broke up their mode of living, their habits of life, introduced disease and decay among them, and it was for this and against this they made war. Could anyone expect less?”

Even in peacetime, Sheridan moved swiftly and decisively. He mobilized troops to fight the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Sheridan died in 1888.

– Lt. Col. Theodore S. Bowers, who was a staff officer to Grant, was killed in a railroad accident 11 months after Appomattox.

– Lt. Col. Adam Badeau, an aide to Grant, helped the general / president write his memoirs. There was a dispute about payment, and Badeau eventually settled with Grant's heirs for \$10,000. He wrote several books about his Civil War experiences and died in 1895.

– Lt. Col. Ely S. Parker, a full-blooded chief of the Seneca nation, wrote out the final copy of the surrender terms in ink after the penciled and edited version was agreed to by Lee and Grant. President Grant appointed Parker in 1869 as the first Native American commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He later made a fortune on Wall Street, lost it and wound up as a clerk in the New York City Police Department. He died in 1895.

– Brig. Gen. George H. Sharpe was an assistant provost marshal and paroled 28,000 Confederates at Appomattox. In 1867, he led a probe to Europe looking for conspirators in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and managed to bring back John Surratt, son of one of the plotters. The trial eventually ended in a hung jury. Sharpe died in 1900.

– Capt. Robert Todd Lincoln, the youngest (age 21) and lowest-ranking officer at the surrender, was the oldest son of President Lincoln.

He was connected with the assassinations of three presidents. Lincoln was present at his father's bedside when the president died; he was in the crowd at the Washington, D.C., railroad station when President James Garfield was shot in 1881; and was at the Buffalo (N.Y.) Pan-American Exposition when President William McKinley was shot in 1901. He later refused presidential invitations, saying, “There is a certain fatality about presidential functions when I am present.”

Lincoln died in 1926, the last surviving witness to Lee's surrender.

## ***From the Commander*** ***– continued from page 1***

colonel of the 38th. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Cold Harbor, Va., the capture of Weldon Railroad and the siege of Petersburg. He was wounded June 16, 17 and 18.

On March 24, 1865, he was elevated to command the 109th New York and fought in the final battles at Petersburg (described on page 2 of this newsletter).

Returning to the 38th Wisconsin, on May 23, 1865, Pier led the regiment in the Army of the Potomac victory parade in Washington D.C. He served as President of Generals of Court Martial in Washington before returning to Wisconsin.

After his discharge, Pier became a lawyer, managed a bank and the family farm, owned a newspaper, ran a lumber business and was active in Republican politics and the Grand Army of the Republic. He moved to Milwaukee in 1888.

Pier was instrumental in organizing the Great Reunion of 1880, which revitalized the Grand Army,

and Milwaukee's National GAR Encampment in 1889. At the time of his death, he was a member and past commander of E.A. Brown Post #130, Fond du Lac.

C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 is the result of merging two earlier units of the Sons: Badger Camp #1 and C.K. Pier Camp #35.

Camp #1, originally chartered in Waukesha in 1883, surrendered its charter four years later. It eventually was reorganized in Milwaukee and re-chartered on March 31, 1892, with 26 members.

Camp #35 was formed primarily to entertain those who were visiting the 1889 National GAR Encampment and was chartered on March 21 of that year with 16 members. Two months later Pier visited his namesake, encouraging its members and reinforcing their enthusiasm.

The two camps cooperated and participated with each other in most observances and social activities. By 1900, disinterest in the military and a membership decline in the GAR and Sons helped force the issue of pursuing a merger. And so the two became one and were granted a charter on Dec. 3, 1901.

### **CIVIL WAR TRIVIA**

**Q:** What was a  
fife major?

**A:** Some units had bands, while others are listed as having principal musicians. Other regimental or battalion levels had a fife and drum corps consisting of 10 fifers and 10 drummers drawn from each company by the drum major, according to <http://www.unionvolunteersfifeanddrum.com/> The drum major and fife major were noncommissioned officers who were responsible for selecting, training and organizing the corps. Wisconsin Department GRO Tom Mueller reports that one fife major was Willis Russell of Oakfield, in the 14th Wisconsin Regiment, Company A, promoted to that job on Jan. 1, 1865. And of course, fife musicians also were used as stretcher bearers and aides to the medical staff.

### **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

2 – Dennis Slater  
9 – Mikko Lagunero  
13 – Dave Howard

**Congratulations,  
Brothers!!!**



**Report any address or e-mail changes to  
Secretary David Howard  
[Lifeopp@yahoo.com](mailto:Lifeopp@yahoo.com)**

**Newsletter editor  
Cmdr. Tom Mueller  
[thewisconsin3800@gmail.com](mailto:thewisconsin3800@gmail.com)**

**Website <http://www.suvcw-wi.org>**

### **CAMP CALENDAR**

21 March: Civil War Expo, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Civil War Museum, Kenosha.

29 March (Sunday): Member Orientation, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Delavan for the sake of the new Camps in Norway and Edgerton. A worthy session for all of us to review traditions, goals, etc.

25 May: Memorial Day, at Calvary Cemetery, Milwaukee. Archbishop Jerome Listecki celebrates the memorial Mass.

6 June: Department Encampment at Civil War Museum, Kenosha. Save the date.

18 July: Dedication of new Civil War memorial at Camp Randall in Madison. Save the date.