



THE DISPATCH

SUMMER 2021

PUBLISHED BY SUVCW DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

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Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

SUVCW

Commander's Column



Brothers,
COMMANDER'S COLUMN

I had the honor of serving as the principal speaker at the City of Madison's 2021 Memorial Day observances. For the Commander's Column in the Summer 2021 edition of the Dispatch I offer my remarks from that occasion

Friends, thank you for being here on this 153rd Memorial Day. I am honored to be the Commander of the Col. Henry Harnden Camp #2 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and to have a role in this ceremony.

I wish to begin by giving thanks. Our honored dead deserve our first and foremost thanks and gratitude. They are the men and women who, as President Lincoln described them in his famous address, just repeated to us, gave their lives that our Nation might live. Scripture reminds us that, "No greater love hath a man than that he should give his life for his friends."

Second, I wish to give thanks to all of the members of our Armed Services, cadets and trainees, active duty, reservists, retirees, and veterans, who have given their oaths, and have, in effect, written blank checks to Uncle Sam, payable with their lives. Those of us of the Sons of Union Veterans particularly thank our forebearers for their courageous actions in our Country's greatest political crisis, and in the U.S. war that produced one-half of all in-service deaths in of all of America's wars.

Third, I thank those here who have made these observances possible. I give thanks to the Scouts who met here early to make logistical arrangements, to the Madison Veterans Council for their overall leadership, to Madison's

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mayor, City Council, and Parks Department for their support, to the various veterans and patriotic organizations that participate today and throughout the year in honoring our Country. Here I include such diverse organizations as our American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars logistical arrangements, to the Madison Veterans Council for their overall leadership, to Madison's mayor, City Council, and Parks Department for their support, to the various veterans and patriotic organizations that participate today and throughout the year in honoring our Country. Here I include such diverse organizations as our American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts and their auxiliaries, all of our other veterans' organizations, our hereditary organizations like the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution, to others such as the Marine Corps Reserve, the Navy League, the Madison History Roundtable, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and Foundation, Company K of the 2nd Wisconsin Infantry Association, and the Buena Vista Battery.

You, too, can join these efforts, be they in the active duty armed forces or in our various reserve, veterans' and patriotic organizations. I can speak for all of them in borrowing a verse from the "Battle Cry of Freedom", which our band will next play, "We will welcome to our numbers the loyal, true, and brave!"

Last, but significantly, I thank all of you for attending, for exercising your inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness by choosing to be here. You are demonstrating your devotion to that cause for which our honored dead gave their last full measure of devotion. So, what is that cause to which they and we are devoted?

One eloquent expression about that cause is contained in the creed we of the Sons of Union Veterans recite in each of our monthly meetings. It is the following Americans' Creed, written during the First World War:

"I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign states; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established on those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my Country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its Flag; and to defend it against all enemies."

The dead from all of America's battles, from the village greens of Lexington and Concord to the rugged mountains of Afghanistan and the deserts of Iraq are estimated at one point two million. The exact number isn't known, because so many were not adequately recorded in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and on the Confederate side in the Civil War. The number of missing in action is at best an estimate, and for the same reason. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has painstaking and extensive records of service members unaccounted for from WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Gulf War, and other recent conflicts. The totals from those conflicts, as of last Friday, exceeded 81,700.

Just from Wisconsin, there are 1320 WWII missing, 126 Korean War, 26 from the Vietnam War and one from the Cold War. The last-named of the Vietnam missing is my cousin, Robert F. Wilke. Here is his profile on the DPAA's web site:

"Lt. Col. Robert Frederick Wilke entered the U.S. Air Force from Wisconsin and served as a member of the 602nd Special Operations Squadron, 56th Air Commando Wing. On January 17, 1968, he was the pilot of an A-1H Skyraider (tail number 53-134518) that took off from Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, on a search and rescue mission for two downed fliers, northeast of Don Hai Dinh, Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. Upon entering the search area, Lt. Col. Wilke radioed his wingman to hold back due to a solid overcast and stated that he alone would try to get below the clouds to locate the downed pilots. The final radio contact with Lt. Col. Wilke was after he had descended below the cloud layer. His aircraft was then shot down by ground fire from enemy forces in the valley below. The aircraft and his remains could not be recovered, and he remains unaccounted for. Subsequent to the incident, and while carried in the status of missing in action, the U.S. Air Force promoted Lt. Col. Wilke to the rank of Colonel. Today, Colonel Wilke is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

"Based on all information available, DPAA assessed the individual's case to be in the analytical category of Active Pursuit."

What I have just read is a comfort to me and to our family, and I thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to read it here on Memorial Day. In the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, we carry on the customs and traditions of our ancestor's veterans' organization, the Grand Army of the Republic. Let me conclude by offering this reading from the Grand Army of the Republic's memorial dedication service from 1917. It is titled, "The Unknown Dead".

The Unknown Dead
 Above their rest there is no weeping,
 Only the voice of songbirds thrills the air.
 Unknown their graves, yet they are in God's keeping,
 There are none 'missing' from His tender care.
 He knows each hallowed mound, and at His pleasure.
 Marshalls the sentinels of earth and sky.
 O'er their repose kind Nature heaps her treasure,
 Fanned by soft winds which 'round them gently sigh.
 Bravely they laid their all upon the alter,
 Counting as naught the sacrifice and pain,
 Theirs but to do and die without a falter –
 Ours to enjoy the victory and the gain.

138th Annual Department Encampment



Attendees at the 138th Annual Department Encampment gather on the church steps after the meeting.

Scott Schable photo.

At the 138th Annual Department Encampment at the Lafayette Church in rural Elkhorn on June 5, Camp #2 Commander John Decker was elected Department Commander, Camp Secretary-Treasurer Alan Hembel was re-elected as Department Secretary, and Past Camp Commander Fred Campbell was re-elected to the Department Council.

Br. Campbell was also appointed to the new office of Department Assistant Secretary. Camp Junior Vice Commander Ben Hobbins was appointed to the new post of Department Recruiting Officer.

Br. Bill Parker, who recently transferred to Camp #2 from Camp #8, had his rank of Past Camp Commander restored by the vote of the Encampment, as proposed by previous action of our Camp.



Bryan and Eli Magnum, father and son, are among those formally initiated by JVCinC Bruce Frail during the Encampment.

Steve Michaels photo.

Department Commander Brian McManus presented 5-year service award certificates to Brothers John Wedeward, Bryan Magnum, and Eli Magnum.



The Encampment also gave a standing ovation to our own Alan Hembel, PDC, when he was presented with a 55-year service award certificate.

Camp 1



Penny Afton-Sage visits Afton Circle, which is a tribute to her relative on the west side of Wood National Cemetery, far from Pvt. John Afton's grave.



Afton's grave was decorated with items from the GAR ritual such as the canteen and haversack, and roses placed by the family.



Descendants of Pvt. John Afton, including 12-year-old James Beahan of Spring Lake, Mich., a 5-great-grandson, traveled to Milwaukee to honor him on the 150th anniversary of his death



The event had to be COVID private, but the Camp, Auxiliary and SUVCW turned out in force for a May 30 Memorial Day commemoration at Calvary Cemetery. For the May 22 event for Pvt. John Afton Honor Guard had nine rifles, thanks to help from Camps 15 and 4. The First Brigade Band played. Afterwards, Clifford Howard was initiated into the Order, accompanied by PCC David Howard, his grandfather.

Camp 1 held a unique and touching ceremony to honor the 150th anniversary of the first burial at Wood National Cemetery in Milwaukee, with nine descendants traveling from the soldier's home state of Michigan to attend.

Pvt. John Afton died at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home on May 22, 1871, and was buried the same day. Afton was in the 1st Michigan Infantry and then the 7th Michigan Cavalry, in which he was wounded and captured at Gettysburg.

Penny Afton-Sage of his hometown of Grand Rapids, Mich., his great-great-great grandchild, rounded up the other relatives – 4-g and even a 5-g, age 12.

Afton-Sage had come to Milwaukee last fall to try to find the grave but got lost and walked around nearby Calvary Cemetery for two hours. She finally left empty-handed and exasperated.

Then came a bolt out of the blue this spring: Camp 1 PCC Tom Mueller emailed her because she had put a brief biography on Afton's Find a Grave page a year ago, which made her relatively easy to track down.

The Camp wanted to honor him on his 150th anniversary. Afton was age 54 or 55 at the time of Gettysburg.

His 7th Cav made a dramatic saber charge on July 3, led by 23-year-old Brig. Gen. George Armstrong Custer. It is in several books, and passages were read during the event.

The commemoration was private because of COVID but drew two forms of media coverage. A huge splash of photos is at <http://www.milwaukeeindependent.com/photos/john-afton-descendants-honor-first-veteran-buried-wood-national-cemetery-150th-anniversary/>. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel ran an advance story and posted photos from the event.

Video clips from the event on the Camp's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/CKPierBadger. Scroll down a couple items, and you can see Taps and the family placing flowers. The video posting was a first for Camp 1.

– In May, we returned to in-person meetings for first time since March 2020. We had kept our usual schedule throughout, seamlessly moving to Zoom.

— Camp GRO Tom Ludka and Marge Berres put nine unmarked graves at Forest Home Cemetery up for adoption, and the Camp quickly funded the stone for one of them: Sgt. John F. Roberts of the 24th Wisconsin infantry, who died on May 15, 1878.

Roberts, of Milwaukee, was in Company B, and for a time was commissary sergeant for the regiment. He served from Aug. 11, 1862, to June 30, 1865.

Also at Forest Home, the cemetery foundation has slated five historically significant, private stones for replacement as soon as funds can be raised. Three involve the Civil War. See <https://foresthomecemetery.com/monument-preservation-projects>. One is for Brig. Gen. Lysander Cutler, who first was the colonel of the 6th Wisconsin Infantry. His obelisk is eroded, the foundation says.

Camp 2

Memorial Day 2021 at Union Rest Cemetery



*The VFW 1318 band in performance on Memorial Day.
Scott Schable photo.*



*Crowd, color guards, and coverage by two of Madison's TV broadcast stations.
Scott Schable photo.*



*Ms. Josie Picard performs "Hallelujah (Veterans Version)"
With M.C. Br. Hembel standing by.
Scott Schable photo.*



*PCC Fred Campbell reads General Logan's Orders.
Scott Schable photo.*

LAST SOLDIER MARKER DEDICATION CEREMONIES WERE HELD IN TAYLOR AND DUNN COUNTIES ON JUNE 12



Albert A. Bundick
1846 – 1935
Musician
3rd PA Heavy Artillery,
188th PA Inf. Vols.
Photo courtesy of Peter Salzman.



*DC John Decker confers with great
grandson Peter Salzman at graveside.
Sandra Decker photo.*



*Four generations of descendants
attended the ceremony, including
Albert Bundick's last surviving
grandchild, Mary Jean (Bundick)
Salzman.
Sandra Decker photo.*

Camp 2

Dunn County, Faith Lutheran Cemetery, Colfax



Ebert S. Sorkness
1839 – 1940
12th Wis. Inf. Vols.
Sandra Decker photos.



Volleys were fired and Taps were sounded by an American Legion/VFW honor guard.



Susan Hill, Dunn County Genealogical Society, introduced the program

CAMP #2 IS COLLABORATING WITH THE NATHANIEL AMES CHAPTER OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION ON AN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION



At our January monthly meeting Camp Patriotic Instructor Br. Bill Raftery suggested we celebrate Independence Day with the time-honored public reading of the Declaration of Independence.

At our January monthly meeting Camp Patriotic Instructor Br. Bill Raftery suggested we celebrate Independence Day with the time-honored public reading of the Declaration of Independence.

His idea was immediately embraced, as was the notion of conducting the observance at the grave of Nathaniel Ames in Oregon, Wisconsin. Ames was Wisconsin's last surviving veteran of the Revolutionary War, and was given the honor of hoisting the Colors at an 1861 Union rally in nearby Rome Corners. His eldest son served in the War of 1812 and his youngest in the Civil War.

Camp #2's Senior Vice Commander, Ben Hobbins is, coincidentally, the president of the Nathaniel Ames Chapter of the SAR, and he enthusiastically took the lead in organizing the jointly-

sponsored event



American Liberty Elm at the Ames Family Plot.

Photo courtesy Ben Hobbins.

Br. Ben's most noteworthy achievement so far has been to have McKay Nurseries donate a 20-foot American Elm to enhance the Ames Family Plot.

The ceremony will be held from 1:00 to 2:00 PM on Sunday, July 4, 2021 at the Prairie Mound Cemetery on North Main Street (County Highway MM) in Oregon, Wisconsin (about 8 miles south of Madison). Set-up will take place from noon to 1:00.

Because the drives within the cemetery are narrow, motorists are urged to park on Braun Road, which intersects with Main Street near the main cemetery entrance, and has a traffic signal for the convenience of pedestrians.

Motorists arriving from the north (U.S. Hwy. 14) are also urged NOT to take the detour on County Road M. Despite construction, County Road MM remains open to the McDonalds Restaurant opposite the cemetery, and beyond.

Camp 8

Ceremonies at the Lincoln Tomb



PDC Kim Heltemes presents wreath At the Lincoln Tomb ceremony on April 17, 2021



Camp 15

Commander McManus Closes Second Term

Camp #15's Brian McManus finished a second term in June as chief of the Wisconsin Department of the SUVCW and turned the commander's gavel over to John Decker from Camp #2 in Madison. Take a bow, Commander McManus, on a job well done.

Brother Brian dealt with a myriad of issues over his term, as well as the onerous Covid outbreak as he and the Wisconsin camps carried on the work of the Sons. Brother Decker, the newly-installed Wisconsin Department Commander, praised Brother Brian after the Encampment "for his outstanding leadership in the difficult pandemic year."

Commander McManus personally dedicated 14 Last Soldier graves across northern Wisconsin last year, a high point of his term. Commander Decker also praised Camp #15 and Camp #4 in Waukesha for hosting the summer meeting of camps from around Wisconsin. "A great Encampment," the new Commander said.



First place for Camp15's Float

Camp #15's wagon float in the Fourth of July parade in Waterford on Sunday won first place in the non-commercial category. That means a \$100 check to the camp and an invite to Waterford's Fourth of July awards cook-out on July 22nd at Whitford Park in Waterford. Be there at 6 p.m.

All brothers are invited to the awards cook-out. E-mail Dave Daley if you plan to attend - he needs to give a head-count to the Waterford Fourth of July parade committee on how many Camp #15 brothers they can expect at the cook-out.

Congratulations to all who helped with the float and took part in the Fourth of July parade on Sunday. And a big thanks to Brother Bob Koenecke who provided the wagon for the Camp #15 float, came up with the design for the float banner, painted an old sauerkraut barrel with "U.S." and "Powder" to give an air of authenticity to the float and got the float from his Town of Wheatland farm to Waterford for the parade.

And Bob and Marge Koenecke's daughter Beth and Beth's children decorated the float. Thank you, Brother Bob and your family - your hard work was a big factor in the camp winning first-place in the Fourth of July parade.

Camp 15



Camp #15 had a full plate this past Memorial Day weekend. On Sunday, May 30th, the camp took part in Memorial Day ceremonies at Calvary Cemetery in Milwaukee where Camp #1's Chaplain, Dean Collins, who is also a Catholic deacon, commemorated the fallen soldiers there.

The next day, Monday, May 31st, Camp #15 participated in Memorial Day ceremonies at Norway Lutheran Cemetery in Wind Lake where the local American Legion post read off the names of all the fallen soldiers buried at that cemetery.

Following that ceremony, Camp #15 held a separate commemoration there at the grave of Col. Hans C. Heg, the camp's namesake who fell at the Battle of Chickamauga in Georgia during the Civil War. The Camp #15 brothers and their families then convoyed to the camp's Lafayette Church in Walworth County where the camp honored the Civil War soldiers buried there with a three-volley musket salute.

Following that commemoration, the Camp #15 brothers and their families enjoyed a picnic and brat-roast on the church lawn. As the old weeklies used to report, a good time was had by all.

CAMP #15's "DRUMMER BOY" JOINS THE U.S. NAVY



Camp #15's Max Frederick, who joined the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War eight years ago as a 10-year-old and first served as a drummer boy, is shipping off July 19th to the U.S. Navy where he plans to study nuclear propulsion.

Now eighteen, Brother Max graduated from Catholic Central High School in Burlington May 18th with high academic honors, lettering in football and baseball and playing key roles in the school's musicals during his four years in the music program.

Brother Max grew up in Kansasville, Wis., and credits his membership in the SUVCW with helping steer him to the military. "In the Sons, I picked up on the call to service," he says, "and I wanted to be in a group of people that have the camaraderie I experienced in the Sons." In the Navy, Max plans to continue his membership in Camp #15 but will also get involved in a camp near wherever he is stationed.

The constant encouragement he received from the other brothers on anything to do with the SUVCW, and learning from other members what they knew are among his fondest memories as a junior member, Max says.

Initially a member of Camp #1 in Milwaukee, in 2015, Max became a charter lineal member of a new camp close to his home in Racine County – Camp #15, based in Wind Lake, Wis. There, Max began carrying flags and muskets in parades. One special memory for him is a moving ceremony in 2016 when the camp

rededicated a statue of Abraham Lincoln in Burlington, Wis., that had been torn down by vandals. The camp marched to the site as large clusters of snowflakes fell gently on them.

Brother Max says he is grateful for his year in the SUVCW, and with particular thanks for his Camp #15 brothers. "The original Camp #15 members are guys who really love the Sons, everything they were doing in it, and everyone who was doing it with them," Max says. "They really love the group." I liked talking to all of them and being around them," Max continued. I want to thank them for sharing their enjoyment with me despite the difference in age demographic. They have full lives, I was just starting mine. They made it easy to be part of the camp."



TRIVIA

Q: What was a gum blanket?

A: This piece of equipment was the standard infantry ground cover. Between 1860 and 1866, the Union bought or made 1,893,007 of them and issued one to every soldier. They were among the first items given to a recruit and offered protection against rain and muddy ground. See

<https://udemancipationproject.wordpress.com/resources/objects/gum-blanket/and> <https://regtqm.com/product/gum-blanket-rubber/>

Q: What are some facts about soldiers and tuberculosis?

A: About 14,000 troops died from tuberculosis during the war, and countless more had latent (no symptoms for long periods) forms of the disease, according to

<https://civilwarmedicalhistory.weebly.com/diseases.html>

Common symptoms that occurred with tuberculosis were a chronic cough, bloody sputum, fever, night sweats and weight loss.

Q: What was the agency U.S. Military Rail Roads?

A: In January 1862, Congress authorized President Lincoln to seize control of railroads and telegraphs for military use. Operations were entrusted to this new War Department agency, led by Daniel C. McCallum, former general superintendent of the New York and Erie Railroad. At first, the system consisted only of seven miles of the Washington and Alexandria Railroad; by war's end it controlled a network of more than 2,000 miles of railroads and captured Southern rail lines. More at http://www.learningabe.info/Military_Railroad.html and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_McCallum

Camp 56

The camp met on June 12, 2021 at the White Bear Lake home of Junior Vice Commander Gary Carlberg. The next camp meeting will be August 14, 2021 at 1000 hours, same location. Lunch on White Bear Lake is a possibility afterwards.

The Last Soldier Project is underway. Minnesota has 87 counties. Two are close to being ready for a ceremony: Ramsey and Aitken.

On June 5, 2021 a ceremony was conducted by Camp 56 to dedicate a replacement gravestone for Moses Basil Bashaw (1841-1875), Co. G of the 53rd New York Infantry at the Arkansaw Cemetery, Arkansaw, Wisconsin. Camp 56 members in attendance: Senior Vice Commander Willenbring, Brother Blankenberg, Brother Dittman, Secretary Campbell and Camp Commander Urbanski. The First Minnesota, Company A turned out 10 soldiers to act as honor guard and Mr. Bryce Stenzel recited the Gettysburg address while presenting an impression as Abraham Lincoln. The American Legion Post 181 of Durand, Wisconsin provided the salute and taps. Channel 18, Eau Claire was present; the news story can be found here: <https://wqow.com/2021/06/05/civil-war-veteran-remembered-generations-after-burial/>.



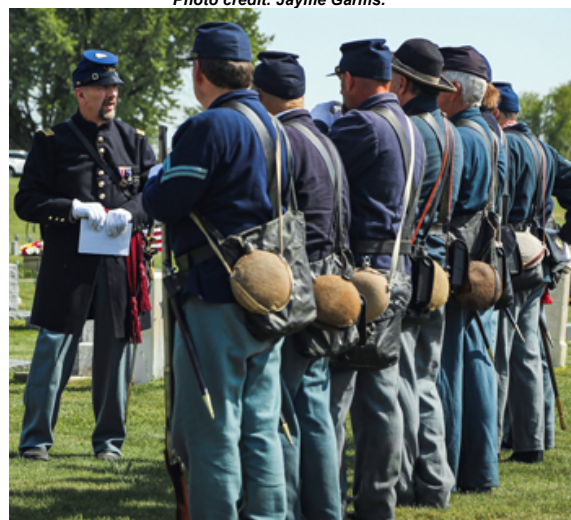
Camp 56 at Lakewood Cemetery, April 17, 2021. Left to right: Brother Blankenberg (behind tree), Senior Vice Commander Willenbring, Secretary/Treasurer Campbell, Junior Vice Commander Carlberg, Camp Commander Urbanski. Present but not pictured: Signals Officer Dittman.

Camp 56 conducted a gravestone dedication for Private George Woodruff (1840-1913), 2nd Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, Company B (Markham's Company), on April 17, 2021 at Lakewood Cemetery. This dedication ceremony was conducted at the request of Major Sullivan Ballou Camp #3 of the Department of Rhode Island. Brother Laurie Woodruff of Ballou Camp 3 is a descendant of George Woodruff.



Brother Steve Blankenberg, Mr. Bryce Stenzel, Senior Vice Commander Andrew Willenbring, and Secretary/Treasurer Mark Campbell take part in the Moses Bashaw gravestone dedication. Not visible behind Mark Campbell: Camp Commander Doug Urbanski.

Photo credit: Jayme Garms.



Camp Commander Doug Urbanski speaks to members of the First Minnesota before the Moses Bashaw gravestone dedication.

Photo credit: Jayme Garms.

Patriotic Instruction

Compiled by PDC Tom Brown

The carbine that Ambrose Burnside invented

A decade before his short rule as commander of the Army of the Potomac, Ambrose Burnside designed and patented a carbine that would be widely used in the Civil War.

Burnside was an 1847 West Point grad, and six years later resigned his commission in the Army to devote himself to full-time work on the weapon.

The Burnside carbine was patented in 1855. It was produced by Bristol Firearms Co. and the Burnside Rifle Co.



Here is a look at the distinctive breech lock, along with the cone-shaped cartridge that Ambrose Burnside also invented.

In 1857, the Burnside won a competition at West Point against 17 other carbine designs. Despite this, few of the carbines were immediately purchased by the government, but this changed with the outbreak of the war, when more than 55,000 were ordered for use by Union cavalymen.

This made it the third-most-popular carbine of the war – the Sharps and Spencer carbines were more widely used.

The unit cost of the Burnside was \$38.50. It was produced from 1858-'70, with more than 100,000 manufactured. It weighed seven pounds and was 39.5 inches long.

The carbine used a special brass cartridge that also was invented by Burnside. Pressing the

weapon's two trigger guards opened the breech lock and allowed the user to insert a cartridge into the chamber. When the trigger was pulled, the hammer struck a percussion cap and caused a spark; a hole in the base of the cartridge exposed the black powder to this spark. The unique cone-shaped cartridge sealed the joint between the barrel and the breech.

Most other breech-loaders of the day tended to leak hot gas when fired, but Burnside's design eliminated this problem. But a common complaint by users was that the unusually shaped cartridge sometimes became stuck in the breech after firing.

The Burnside was a .54 caliber and had a muzzle velocity of 950 ft/second, with an effective range of 200 yards.

On the basis of ordnance returns and ammunition requisitions, it has been estimated that 43 Union calvary regiments were using the Burnside during 1863-'64, and seven Confederate calvary units were at least partially armed with the weapon during the same period.

Five different models were produced. Production was discontinued toward the end of the war, when the Burnside Rifle Co. was given a contract to make Spencer carbines instead.

Burnside was a poor military officer (and not too proud to deny it), but rose through the ranks partly because his carbine was so well-known. He was pressured by President Lincoln several times to take command of the Union Army of the Potomac but repeatedly declined, saying "I was not competent to command such a large army as this."

He eventually did accept command, on Nov. 7, 1862; then led that Army to defeat at the Battle of Fredericksburg a month later. The battle and the subsequent abortive offensive left Burnside's officers complaining loudly to the White House and the War Department that he was incompetent.

He also preformed poorly at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, and a court of inquiry blamed him for the Union failure at the Battle of the Crater, though the blame was later lifted. Lincoln replaced him on Jan. 26, 1863.

Wisconsin Department Commanders

By PCinC Steve Michaels

George W. Palmer

"Dedicated Volunteer"

(1916-1917)

Eau Claire's George W. Palmer was elected at the 1916 Dept. Encampment in Ripon. During the previous seven years, he had vigorously supported the Order.

George was born on Valentine's Day 1874 in Auburn, Indiana, the second oldest of four siblings. His parents, Hiram H. and Mary E. Daly Palmer had come from Ohio and Pennsylvania respectively and settled in Indiana. During the Civil War, Hiram served in Co. A, 100th Indiana Infantry. He participated in the battles of Vicksburg, Jackson, Colliersville, Stockdale No. 4, Holly Springs, Corinth, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, Marietta, Atlanta Campaign, New Hope Church, Kenesaw Mountain, the last battle of Atlanta, Sherman's March

to the Sea, Savannah, Goldsboro and Cumberland Gap. He received a scalp wound in the charge at Missionary Ridge, and was also slightly wounded in the left shoulder, and was hospitalized at Memphis for one month. He was also in the hospital at Grand Junction, Tenn., for three months, suffering from typhoid fever. He was a faithful, brave and active soldier, and earned a promotion to duty sergeant, serving for about two months on Gen. Grant's staff at Washington, at the close of the war. He mustered out as a corporal and took part in the Grand Review at Washington.



In 1892, at age 18, George enlisted in Co. D, 15th U.S. Infantry, serving one year at Fort Sheridan, Ill. He then became an engineer on the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway and later, the California & Pacific Railroad, headquartered in St. Paul. He was an active member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and became keenly aware of the benefits of the Order's fraternal insurance. His younger brother was a brakeman for the Santa Fe Railroad and died in a railroad accident in 1908 at age 20. By 1920, George had become a motor salesman.

George married Lulu May Follett in 1896 and they had four children: Helen I. (1897-1936), Ruth Cordela (1900-1999), Marion Lucinda (1906-08), and Eleanor May (1911-1963).

Interestingly, it seems Palmer tried his hand at minor league baseball. In 1908, Palmer already had a reputation as a catcher and heavy hitter when he played for the Eau Claire Tigers.

Eau Claire's Michael Griffin Camp #35 was chartered in April 1909. Two years later, it supplied more delegates to the Dept. Encampment, held in Green Bay, than any other Camp. The Eau Claire Leader lauded the Camp for supplying the Department with both a Commander (Dr. J.E. Waldron) and an Inspector (Palmer). Both Waldron and Palmer were active in planning the city's Memorial Day observances. Palmer was elected Camp Senior Vice

Commander in 1914 and served as Camp #35's Commander in 1915, when Commander-in-Chief Charles F. Sherman appointed him an Aide. After stepping down as Camp Commander, he was elected Camp Secretary/Treasurer.

Palmer was elected a Nat. Encampment Delegate in 1912 and 1913. He was also elected Dept Junior Vice Commander in 1913, and Dept. Senior Vice Commander in 1915.

In 1916, our Department consisted of 1900 members in 65 Camps. The Order was growing and several new Camps had been organized in the last year. Palmer assisted in organizing Marshfield's W.H. Upham Camp. The Sons had succeeded in raising \$760 toward the \$1000 for a cottage at the Waupaca Veterans' Home.

On October 2nd, the R.B. Hayes Camp #6 was mustered in Elkhorn with 16 members. On May 22, 1917, Black River Falls Camp #4 was mustered with 24 members.

Congress declared war on April 6, 1917. Fraternal organizations, including the Sons of Veterans, cooperated with the government's campaign to "sell the war to the American people." 15% of our Department's membership went into active military service. Overall, 25-30% of all military and naval servicemen were sons or grandsons of Civil War veterans. Palmer, who had served in the war with Spain, served on the Officers' Reserve staff.

Palmer presided over the 1917 Dept. Encampment in Kenosha. Membership stood at about 1,850 members in 64 Camps and the Department had \$200 in cash and property on hand.

After his term, while his youngest daughter was still in school, he became active in the Parent-Teachers Welfare Association, serving as its president.

The post-war depression took its toll, however, and George filed for bankruptcy in April 1921. His petition was granted a year later. He and his wife moved to Bloomington and then, Rock Island, Ill., living in relative obscurity. He changed his name to Walford George Palmer and took a job as an insurance agent. Mrs. Palmer passed away in March 1942. George died on January 23, 1950. They were both buried in Eau Claire's Forest Hill Cemetery.

Written by PCinC Steve Michaels with research assistance from PDC Kent Peterson

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The Marshfield News & Wisconsin Hub, 18 March 1915.



To reach either the Camp's page or its Face book Page, hold curser over the name, hold "Ctrl" and left click

C.K. Pier Badger Camp 1 - Milwaukee
C. K. Pier Badger Camp #1 and Auxiliary #4 meet on the Second Wednesday of the month (except Aug.), at 7 p.m.,
Commander: [Brian Craig](#)
C.K. Pier Badger Auxiliary 4

Henry Harnden Camp 2 - Madison
Commander: [Thomas W. Brodd](#)
Henry Harnden Auxiliary 2

Major General John Gibbon Camp 4 - Waukesha
Meetings @ at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month (except August)
[Commander: H. Craig Wheeler](#)

Old Abe Camp 8 - Fox Cities
Meeting @7 P.M. 3rd Monday of odd months
Commander: [Alan Petit](#)
Edward S. Bragg Auxiliary 6
[Face Book Page](#)

Hans Heg Camp 15
Meeting @ 7 P.M. 1st Thursday, monthly
Commander: [Gerry Drought](#)

L.G. Armstrong 49 – Boscobel
Meetings @ 7 P.M. 3rd Thursday, monthly
Commander: [Charles Griesel](#)

William Colville Camp 56 - Minneapolis/St. Paul
Meeting held Quarterly, 10am, April 4, place TBA
Commander: [Douglas Urbanski](#)

	
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Jr. Vice Commander	Robert F. Koenecke jvc@suvcw-wi.org
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Council 2	Jeffrey M. Graf council2@suvcw-wi.org
Council 3	Fred J. Campbell council3@suvcw-wi.org
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Asst Secretary	Fred J. Campbell, PCC
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<i>Officers were elected at the 5 June 2021 Department Encampment at Elkhorn, Wis. and will serve until the 2022 Department Encampment.</i>	

[Department Facebook Page](#)



SUVCW

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