



The Railsplitter



The Newsletter of the Department of Illinois

Winter 2023

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COMMANDERS CORNER

Happy New Year to all the brothers of the Department of Illinois. I was able to install the new officers in four Camps this year: Peoria, Rockford, Schaumburg, and Aurora. Plus, I attended the Chicago Camps' luncheon on Saturday, January 21st in Elmhurst. We have received the new ribbons for our Department Flag in recognition of past National Encampments that took place in Illinois over the past two decades, in 2002 and 2016. The national has been notified of our May Encampment in Decatur, and will be sending a National Officer to install the new officers.

As spring approaches, we are preparing for our Petersburg Ceremony in April. Shot glasses will be available at the ceremony for "The Toast" and your kind donations will help support the project. Please consider buying a brick in memory of your ancestor to be placed at the site. Proceeds will go to help complete the work being done at the Stephenson memorial.

I hope your camp will stay busy during the winter months. Consider researching the "Last Soldier" project on your list of things to do. I'm looking forward to seeing you in April and May at our upcoming events. *And here's hoping you stay warm and well!*

Gary Gunderson, Commander
Department of Illinois, SUV CW

CHAPLAINS CORNER



PRAYING is talking to God (your Higher Power), and MEDITATION is listening to Him. I find it easiest to speak to Him, and tell Him my wants and needs in certain places - like my Kitchen and Carriage. By the same token - it is easiest for me to listen to Him in those two places and in my bed, before I fall asleep. Do you Pray and Meditate? Do you find it helpful? Just say AMEN if you do.

In Fraternity, Charily, and Loyalty
Chaplain Jerry



If we didn't plug the Department of Illinois' Annual Encampment in Decatur coming up on May 13, we'd never hear the end of it from Dept Councilor and Hecker Camp 443 Commander, Brother Dave Wildermuth.

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION

I recently became interested in poems written during and about the Civil War. I'd like to share four poems with you, one of which was written by a soldier, and the rest by those who experienced the conflict in different, but personal ways.

Beat! Beat! Drums! by Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819 and died on March 26, 1892. Whitman published this poem as a patriotic rally call for the north. Whitman's brother George was a 1st Lieutenant in the 51st New York Infantry Regiment. George sent detailed letters to Walt from the battle front. On December 16, 1862 a listing of fallen and wounded soldiers was listed in the New York Tribune that included 1st Lieutenant G. W. Whitmore. Walt thinking it was his brother, set out to find him. He travelled many miles on foot and having been robbed of his wallet, finally found George alive, with only a flesh wound on his cheek. After seeing the carnage of the battlefield, he vowed never to return to New York, and secured a position as the army's paymaster in Washington D.C. He also volunteered as a nurse in the local army hospitals.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
 Through the windows—through doors—burst like a
 ruthless force,
 Into the solemn church, and scatter the
 congregation,
 Into the school where the scholar is studying,
 Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must
 he have now with his bride,
 Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his
 field or gathering his grain,
 So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill
 you bugles blow.
 Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of
 wheels in the streets;
 Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the
 houses? no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
 No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or
 speculators—would they continue?

Would the talkers be talking? would the singer
 attempt to sing?
 Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case
 before the judge?
 Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles
 wilder blow.
 Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
 Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,
 Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
 Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's
 entreaties,
 Make even the trestles to shake the dead where
 they lie awaiting the hearses,
 So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you
 bugles blow.

Maryland, My Maryland by James Ryder Randall

James Ryder Randall was born on January 1, 1839 and died on January 15, 1908. Randall published this poem, his most remembered, after the death of his friend Francis X. Ward of Randallstown, Maryland. For this he was called the "Poet Laureate of the Lost Cause." Tuberculosis prevented Randall from enlisting in the Confederate Army. However, he was able to serve with the Confederate States Navy. Though he was a native-born Marylander he wrote the poem while being a resident of Augusta, Georgia. Randall considered himself a Georgian by adoption.

The despot's heel is on thy shore, Maryland!
 His torch is at thy temple door, Maryland!
 Avenge the patriotic gore
 That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
 And be the battle queen of yore,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal, Maryland!
 My mother State! to thee I kneel, Maryland!
 For life and death, for woe and weal,
 Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
 And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust, Maryland!
 Thy beaming sword shall never rust, Maryland!
 Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
 Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
 And all thy slumberers with the just,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day, Maryland!
 Come with thy panoplied array, Maryland!
 With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
 With Watson's blood at Monterey,
 With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Come! for thy shield is bright and strong, Maryland!
 Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
 Maryland!
 Come to thine own anointed throng,
 Stalking with Liberty along,
 And chaunt thy dauntless slogan song,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain, Maryland!
 Virginia should not call in vain, Maryland!
 She meets her sisters on the plain-
 "Sic semper!" 'tis the proud refrain
 That baffles minions back again, Maryland!
 Arise in majesty again,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek, Maryland!
 For thou wast ever bravely meek, Maryland!
 But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
 From hill to hill, from creek to creek-
 Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll, Maryland!
 Thou wilt not crook to his control, Maryland!
 Better the fire upon thee roll,
 Better the blade, the shot, the bowl,
 Than crucifixion of the soul,
 Maryland! My Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder-hum, Maryland!
 The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum, Maryland!
 She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb-
 Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
 She breathes! she burns! she'll come! she'll come!
 Maryland! My Maryland!

Our Martyred Soldiers by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born on June 27, 1872 and died on February 9, 1906. Dunbar wrote his first poem at the age of six, while living with his parents in Dayton, Ohio. Much of Dunbar's more popular work in his short lifetime was written in the "Negro dialect" associated with the Antebellum South, though he also used the Midwestern regional dialect of James Whitcomb Riley. His father, Joshua, escaped from slavery in Kentucky before

the war ended. He traveled to Massachusetts and volunteered with the 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, one of the first two Black units to serve in the war. He also served in the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry. Paul Dunbar was the only African American student at Central High School in Dayton, Ohio.

In homes all green, but cold in death,
 Robbed of the blessed boon of breath—
 Resting in peace from field and fray,
 Our martyred soldiers sleeping lay.

Beneath the dew, the rain, the snow,
 They heed no more the bloody foe,
 Their sleep is calm, to them alone
 'Tis giv'n to lie without a moan.

The sun may shine in all his might—
 They know no day, they know no night,
 But wait a still more lasting ray,
 The coming of eternal day.

No longer marches break their rest,
 Or passioned hate thrills through the breast,
 They lie all clothed in calm repose,
 All safe from shots of lurking foes.

The grave's a sacred place where none
 Of Earth may touch the sleeping one;
 Where silence reigns, enthroned, sedate,
 An angel guarding heaven's gate.

The wind may blow, the hail may fall,
 But at the tomb is silence all;
 Man finds no nobler place to pray,
 Then o'er a martyr's lifeless clay.

Sleep on, ye soldiers, men of God,
 A nation's tears bedew the sod;
 'Tis but a short, short time till ye
 Shall through the shining portals flee.

And when this memory lost shall be,
 We turn, oh Father, God, to thee!
 Oh find in heaven some nobler thing
 Then martyrs of which men can sing.

Gettysburg Poem by James Jeffrey Roche

James Jeffrey Roche was born on May 31, 1847 and died on April 3, 1908. James Roche was born on Prince Edward Island, Canada. He came to Boston with his parents in 1866. James joined the staff of the Irish newspaper, becoming editor-in-chief in 1890, and was the leading spokesman for the

Catholic intellectuals living in New England. The inspiration for this poem was gleaned from accounts of those who served in the Union Army along with eyewitness reporters of the day. He also became a successful businessman in the Boston, but later returned to literature, his first love.

There was no union in the land,
Though wise men labored long
With links of clay and ropes of sand
To bind the right and wrong.

There was no temper in the blade
That once could cleave a chain;
Its edge was dull with touch of trade
And clogged with rust of gain.

The sand and clay must shrink away
Before the lava tide:
By blows and blood and fire assay
The metal must be tried.

Here sledge and anvil met, and when
The furnace fiercest roared,
God's undiscerning workingmen
Reforged His people's sword.

Enough for them to ask and know
The moment's duty clear-
The bayonets flashed it there below,
The guns proclaimed it here:

To do and dare, and die at need,
But while life lasts, to fight-
For right or wrong a simple creed,
But simplest for the right.

They faltered not who stood that day
And held this post of dread;
Nor cowards they who wore the gray
Until the gray was red.

For every wreath the victor wears

The vanquished half may claim;
Every monument declares
A common pride and fame.

We raise no altar stones to Hate,
Who never bowed to fear:
No province crouches at our gate,
To shame our triumph here.

Here standing by a dead wrong's grave
The blindest now may see,
The blow that liberates the slave
But sets the master free!

When ills beset the nation's life
Too dangerous to bear,
The sword must be the surgeon's knife,
Too merciful to spare.

O Soldier of our common land,
'Tis thine to bear that blade
Loose in the sheath, or firm in hand,
But ever unafraid.

When foreign foes assail our right,
One nation trusts to thee-
To wield it well in worthy fight-
The sword of Meade and Lee.

Many poems were written during and after the Civil War. There are still many more to research and read. These works certainly give the reader a sense of the times and the loss of life and limb of those who served and gave the ultimate sacrifice.

**Respectfully Submitted in FCL by Michael Zafran,
PI Department of Illinois, and Past Commander P.
H. Sheridan Camp #2**

PDC BYRD SHEPHERD DIES (Feb. 22, 1937- October 25, 2022)

(What follows is an edited version of the obituary that appears on line at the Kurrus Funeral Home website in Belleville, IL.)

Byrd Shepherd, USAF, (Ret.), 85, passed away on October 25, 2022, in Shiloh, IL, peacefully in the arms of his wife of 59 years MaryLou (Jackson). Byrd was a Past Department Commander of Illinois, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and a founding member and first commander of Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443.

Byrd was a member of Mensa and had lifetime memberships in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, Photomappers Association, and the Sons of the American Revolution, as well as the SUVCW. In addition to the

Force, Byrd also served in the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army. In 1957, he joined the Army serving as a cryptographer and radio operator in Okinawa and Korea. He was deployed to Vietnam in 1963. While in Nam, Byrd was attached to the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), to train the South Vietnamese Army. Later his health suffered due to exposure to Agent Orange.

After nine years in the Army, Byrd joined the Air Force. While stationed in Hawaii he graduated from Chaminade University, with honors. In 1970, after Officers Training School, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. After 24 years of military service he retired as a Captain. Byrd's family has served in the military since the French and Indian War, a record which continued through his son, Scott, who was a sniper in the Marine Corps during Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Respectfully Submitted;
PDC Ron Clark

LINCOLN DEATH DAY ASSOCIATION (DDA)

Rarely does Lincoln's Death Day fall on a Saturday. Accordingly, the DDA board has decided against holding a Death Day Ceremony at Lincoln's Tomb on April 15. To avoid duplication, the DDA will instead attend the tomb ceremony sponsored by MOLLUS and the SUVVCW beginning at 10:00am that morning.

Likewise, the board has decided not to hold its annual DDA banquet following the Lincoln's Tomb Ceremony this year. Its membership is aware that they may sign-up and attend the banquet of the above-mentioned organizations as instructed in the latest issue of "The Banner".

The Board has instead decided to hold its banquet and program this year on Lincoln's Death Day eve, Friday, April 14. Planning is underway to select a site and work out details. This event promises to be a pleasant and affordable attraction not only for the DDA, but for Brothers from Camps throughout the Order who plan on arriving in Springfield the night before Saturday's Lincoln Tomb ceremony, who are also being invited. Those who are interested in learning more about the event, and possibly attending, are encouraged to send an email to Brother Chuck Murphy, at murphy2067@comcast.net by no later than Sunday, March 5, 2023. Once we know the number of Brothers interested in attending, plans will be finalized and a flier, which will include details about the banquet and program, as well as payment information and how to make reservations, will be emailed to all those who send an email to Brother Chuck by the date listed above. Courtesy Br. Chuck Murphy (Sorry, but the DDA is not interested in the business of making lodging arrangements.)

A Follow Up: The Civil War Tapestry of a Very Special Relief Sculpture



If you recall, the story about a very special relief sculpture was featured in the Fall 2022 Railsplitter. It is an interesting story, but what has not been covered yet is how it came about. How did Gina and Brother Stuart meet, and how was it that Stuart ended up sculpting the memorial for a London cemetery?

Gina met Stuart as they both attended the April 13, 2022 ceremony at Lincoln Cemetery in Blue Island, Illinois celebrating confirmation of James Cleggett's heretofore unknown gravesite. While at the cemetery, Gina looked around at other Civil War soldier grave sites and, on one in particular, she noticed a unique memorial designating a "Last Soldier" marker. Stuart had designed and produced the marker and that led them to discussing him possibly designing an appropriate sculpture honoring American Civil War veterans buried in London's Islington and San Pancras Cemetery. Courtesy Bros. Stuart and Chuck

CAMP NEWS

McClelland Camp #4 Springfield

It promises to be a busy spring/summer season. The Camp has identified and confirmed three "Last Soldier" grave sites in Adams, Calhoun, and Schuyler Counties. In addition to "Last Soldier" ceremonies, we'll be engaged in Lincoln's Tomb commemoration on April 15, and we're helping with a May 5-7 event in Jacksonville, called "Gen. Grierson Heritage Days", in honor of hometown hero General Benjamin H. Grierson, of Grierson's Raid fame. We're anxiously anticipating the Dept Encampment in Decatur on May 13, plus we're looking forward to the Benjamin P. Thomas Civil War conference scheduled for June 3 at Illinois College in Jacksonville. Further, we continue to work on scheduling a ceremony to honor General/Governor John M. Palmer in Carlinville, IL.

Respectfully Submitted, Brother Chuck Murphy, Camp 4 PI



THE PHOTO ABOVE WAS PROVIDED BY GINA COSTIN, VIA BROTHER STUART STEFANY. IT IS THE LINCOLN MONUMENT IN LONDON'S PARLIAMENT SQUARE. IT IS OPPOSITE BIG BEN AND WESTMINSTER ABBEY. NOTE STUART'S SCULPTURE AT THE BASE, ISOLATED BENEATH THE THREE WREATHS LOCATED IMMEDIATELY ABOVE IT. WHEN HIS SCULPTURE IS FINISHED, IT'LL BE MOUNTED ON A PEDESTAL AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE ISLINGTON AND SAN PANCRAS CEMETERY. GINA THOUGHT THAT TAKING A PHOTO OF THE SCULPTURE AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL WOULD MAKE FOR AN INTERESTING, HISTORIC PHOTO. WE AGREE.



THE MAY 13 DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT IS AN ANNUAL EVENT AND AFFORDS BROTHERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSEMBLE TOGETHER AND DISCUSS DEPARTMENT NEWS, PRIORITIES, INITIATIVES, AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. PLUS, BEING ABLE TO TOUR THE HISTORIC OGLESBY HOME IN DECATUR IS AS GOOD AS IT GETS FOR THOSE OF US WHO STILL HOLD ILLINOIS GENERALS, WHO BECAME GOVERNORS AND U. S. SENATORS, NEAR AND DEAR TO OUR HEARTS. WE'RE HOPING FOR A GOOD TURNOUT. A FLIER WILL BE INSERTED IN THE SPRING 2023 RAILSPLITTER TO HELP REMIND EVERYONE ABOUT THE DEPT'S UPCOMING

The photo inset immediately above is taken from Don Prechtel's print "Chancellorsville". During obvious hand-to-hand fighting, it seemingly depicts a Rebel taking aim at the onlooker. It is impossible to know how many Civil War soldiers actually witnessed such an eerie experience first-hand, and survived. It is understandable why some may view this graphic as abeing a sobering and thought-provoking image.

Bryner Camp # 67 Peoria

Bryner Camp 67 has been working on several headstone projects the last several months. This past fall, the Camp ordered a VA stone for PVT Edward D. Lewis, who served from Sept. 28, 1864 to May 23, 1865 in the 29USCT. He passed away at age 73 on Apr. 1, 1907 and was interred, unmarked, in the Public Lot division at Springdale Cemetery in Peoria. PVT Lewis was the husband of Amanda Costley, whose mother was Nance Legins-Costley, the first slave freed by Abraham Lincoln in a court case many years before the Civil War. The stone has been received by the cemetery, but will likely not be set before spring. Once set, a dedication ceremony will take place. Amanda's grave is also unmarked and fundraising is being undertaken to purchase a stone for her. Anyone wishing to donate to this worthy cause should send donations made out to the Peoria Historical Society and sent to Br. Joe Hutchinson, 117 Highview Terrace, East

Peoria, IL 61611 to be forwarded. These two markers are an offshoot of the Moffatt Cemetery project that has been shown in previous issues and is still ongoing.

The Camp has made much progress on the Freedom Memorial Park at the former Moffatt Cemetery site on the south side of Peoria. Through grants from National, the Department of Illinois, and donations from the Brothers of Camp 67 and others, a plaque remembering the 50 veterans interred at the destroyed (and built over) cemetery was acquired from the Illinois State Historical Society. The plaque is currently on display at the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Two more plaques were also purchased, the one honoring Nance leggings-Costley, and the second one telling the story of the cemetery. A public unveiling ceremony of all three plaques was held at the museum this past fall on November 15. Br. Hutchinson said a few words about the G.A.R. and the SUVCW at the ceremony (SEE PHOTO ON THE LEFT BELOW). The two new plaques with the story are on display at the Peoria Park District Riverplex (SEE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT BELOW).

Once final legal work is signed off on by the City of Peoria, for a donated parcel of land at the corner of Griswold and Adams Street, near the site of the abandoned and destroyed cemetery, the plaques will be installed by the Peoria Park District which will be in charge of maintenance. Fundraising is also underway for a flagpole to be erected at the site. A grant request has been submitted to the national SUVCW Grants Committee. The Camp is awaiting word on the status of the request. A dedication ceremony hopefully will take place in the spring near Memorial Day.



Respectfully Submitted, PCC Joe Hutchinson

EDITOR'S NOTE

The photo at the right is of the commemorative, souvenir shot glass that the Dept is offering for a donation of only \$10. The funds will be used to make needed groundskeeping improvements at the Stephenson Memorial site in Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg, IL. The shot glasses will be available at both the annual Stephenson Remembrance ceremony at Petersburg, on the afternoon of April 15, 2023, and at the Dept Encampment on May 13 in Decatur. It may be too small to read, but the declarative sentiment in blue on the side of the glass reads:

GAR
Benjamin Stephenson
Memorial Plaza
Petersburg, Illinois



Hecker Camp #443 Belleville



CAMP ELECTIONS WERE HELD NOVEMBER 2 WHEN DAVE WILDERMUTH WAS ELECTED CAMP COMMANDER, RUSSELL SCHLEICHER WAS ELECTED TO THE POST OF SVC, JOHN STANTON WAS ELECTED JVC, RICHARD PIPER WAS ELECTED TREASURER, AND GERALD SONNENBERG WAS ELECTED SECRETARY. IN THE ABOVE LEFT PHOTO IS BROTHER OF THE YEAR OF COLONEL HECKER CAMP #443, BROTHER RICHARD PIPER. IN THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT ABOVE, CC DAVE WILDERMUTH SWEARS IN NEW MEMBERS. ON THE FAR LEFT IS PCC GREG ZELINSKI, CAMP CHAPLAIN. AND FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ARE NEW MEMBERS JACK WIGHTMAN AND DAVID MOSS. NEXT IS CC WILDERMUTH AND CAMP GUIDE JUSTIN OTTOLINI. THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT IS DEVOTION TO DUTY AWARD RECIPIENT, SECRETARY GERALD SONNENBERG. THE LOWER PHOTO IS OF A VISIT FROM THE GERMAN CONSUL GENERAL FROM CHICAGO TO THE COL. HECKER GRAVESITE AND NEW MEMORIAL MARKER IN SUMMERFIELD, ILLINOIS. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IS CONSUL GENERAL WOLFGANG MESSENGER, HONORARY CONSUL REPRESENTING SOUTHERN ILLINOIS/ST. LOUIS AREA IS PAUL OBERMUEFEMANN, BROTHER JOHN STANTON, BROTHER TREASURER RICHARD PIPER, (THE MARKER) AND THEN CC DAVID WILDERMUTH, BROTHER JOHN MCKEE, AND RETIRED HONORARY CONSUL, LANSING HECKER, GREAT GRANDSON OF COL. HECKER. SAVE THE DATE MARCH 25, 2023 FOR DEDICATION OF HECKER MARKER IN SUMMERFIELD, ILLINOIS AT 10AM. MORE INFORMATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING.



(Photos and article respectively submitted by CC Dave Wildermuth.)



U. S. Grant Camp #1863 Schaumburg



On January 5, 2023 Grant Camp held its inaugural meeting at its new home at the Schaumburg Township Building in Hoffman Estates, Illinois. DC Gary Gunderson installed the new officers for 2023. In the top left photo DC Gunderson is pinning the PCC Badge on PCC Leigh Franklin. From left to right in the above right photo is Camp Council Everett Nylund, SVC (PCC) Leigh Franklin, Secretary Treasurer Bob Kurek, and DC Gunderson. Officers for 2023 not pictured include CC Michael Gregory, JVC Dr. John Zahina-Ramos, Camp Council Nick Kaup, and Brother Jim Arnold. Respectfully Submitted by Robert Kurek, Sec/Treas.

Old Glory Camp #6165 Chicago

A very unusual event occurred in Chicago on Saturday, November 5, 2022 at Montrose Cemetery, Chicago. Private Samuel (Day) Dale passed away in 1907. His unmarked grave lay in that state until Ms. Joanne Kuzmicki of Tinley Park, Illinois reached out to Commander-in Chief Bruce Frail for help. Together they researched Private Dale's military records. Joanne is a descendant of Private Dale's youngest child, Esther. A marker was ordered through the VA. Funds were raised in part by the Department of Illinois, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, to pay for its installation. Old Glory Camp #6165, Chicago organized and conducted the ceremony complete with a cannon salute celebrating his life and commemorating his service in the 1st New Jersey Light Artillery. Pictured on the left below is Pvt. Dale's marker and on the right is a wreath which contains his photo in the center.



CC Stefany, Custer Camp #1 Wilmette attended the event for Pvt. Dale as well. He also commented on the foul weather and forwarded the photos found immediately below. Our brothers braved drizzling rain and gusting 60 mile an hour winds to re-dedicate the headstone of Private Day. The event was organized by Nick Kaup of Old Glory Camp 6165. Featured in the photos from left to right below are DC Gary Gunderson, and Brothers Jeff Kamp, Lee Lasseigne, and Steven Westlake.

Respectively Submitted, CC Stuart Stefany, Custer Camp #1



In the above left photo is Chicago's Own Young Marines Unit posting "Old Glory", their own banner, as well as the colors for Camp #6165. The photo on the right is of the Camp's freezing office holders.

Old Glory Camp 6165 Chicago - cont.

On Saturday, November 12th, our camp participated in Union Ridge Cemetery's annual Veterans Weekend Program. The cemetery was established in 1841 and is one of Chicago's oldest operational cemeteries in the area.



IN THE PHOTO AT LEFT IS NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JERRY KOWALSKI HANDLING INVOCATION AND B E N E D I C T I O N HONORS AS ONLY HE CAN. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT ARE CHAPLAIN JERRY; PCC SHERIDAN CAMP #2, AND DEPT PI, MICHAEL ZAFRAN; MAJOR DR. THOMAS HAUFF, 4TH MILITARY DISTRICT (RET.) SVR; AND PDC AND CC NICK KAUP.





In the above left photo is Chicago's Own Young Marines posting "Old Glory", their own banner, and the colors of Camp # 6165. The photo on the right is of the Camp's "freezing" officer corps.

Respectfully Submitted
PDC, CC Nick Kaup

In Three Parts - A "Railsplitter" Extra

"The Shiloh Triad: Lost Stories of Three Illinoisans at Pittsburg Landing" (Part Two of Three). *This topic is pertinent to the Dept of Illinois as all three recipients served with Illinois regiments.*



Private John Wade McDonald (1843-1910) served in Company E, 20th Illinois Infantry Regiment. Before the war he lived in Waynesville, Illinois and after the war he lived in San Diego, California. At Shiloh, his regiment was assigned to Colonel C. Carroll Marsh's 2nd Brigade, in MG John A. McClernand's 1st Division. His medal was awarded August 27, 1900.

On the morning of April 6, 1862, McClernand's boys anxiously awaited as Union General William Tecumseh (Cump) Sherman's 5th Division held near Shiloh Church, until almost 9:00am. The situation was grave. By 10:00, BG Prentiss' 6th Division was also forced to withdraw. As Sherman's and Prentiss' boys ran helter-skelter back through McClernand's awaiting lines, they hollered something to the tune of "we're licked, run for your lives". By 10:30, the Rebels were having their way amidst McClernand's scurrying infantry as well, in the area of the Crossroads, just north of the intersection of Hamburg-Purdy Road and Corinth Road.

As you might imagine, John Wade McDonald was known as just plain Mack to his pals. As the Confederate juggernaut rammed through McClernand's lines, Mack remembers being in sheer panic-mode when his musket jammed after firing only five rounds. He was flailing around trying everything he could to unclog the jam when, he finally thought to place the ramrod against a tree sapling, and fiercely shoved the barrel to push the charge down. Finally, it worked. As he stood up to cap his weapon, he noticed that the oncoming Johnnies were only about 100 yards away, and that he was

surrounded by only the dead and dying. He had been so fixed on his jammed weapon that he failed to hear the command to retreat. And then, suddenly, he heard “Mack, come back, come back”.

THIS PHOTO OF JOHN WADE McDONALD, BELOW, WAS FOUND ON LINE BY GOOGLING JOHN WADE McDONALD CIVIL WAR MEDAL OF HO HONOR RECIPIENT.



It was around 11:00am when after firing that last shot, Mack turned to run pell-mell back to his retreating regiment, when he was distracted by a pair of hands reaching up to him. They were Private Benjamin S. Brown’s, or just Ben to his pals. They had stood shoulder to shoulder on the line but Mack had been so focused that he failed to notice that Ben had fallen wounded. Mack wrote later, “He was bleeding from his mouth and obviously suffering from severe wounds.” Ben moved his lips, but his injuries were such that he couldn’t talk, and Mack noted later that he was “indescribably pathetic”. There was no time for talk anyway. Mack had a split-second decision to make. Ben was in tremendous pain, possibly mortally wounded, and totally helpless. Not knowing for sure, was Mack to assume that Ben would die anyway and just focus on saving himself? There was no time to think about such for the Johnnies were coming fast with guns blazing. There was no time! There was no time! There was no...!

Private McDonald’s medal citation reads, “Was severely wounded while endeavoring, at the risk of his life, to carry to a place of safety a wounded and helpless comrade.”



Mack hurriedly slung his gun over his shoulder and bent over to wrap his arms around Ben’s upper body and bearing north, began to half-carry and half-drag him some forty yards. He came across two other soldiers from E Company, and they helped carry Ben for another hundred yards or so, possibly into the general area of Water Oaks Pond near the camps of the 48th Illinois Infantry Regiment. Panicked, but totally exhausted, when they stopped to rest for a minute, Mack’s two helpers were immediately gunned down and within seconds, he was wounded in his left thigh, rendering his fighting days over. Ben’s wounds proved fatal. Pvt. McDonald was all of 18 years old.

BREAKING NEWS

Those of you who are also members of the Illinois State Historical Society are already aware that in its January - February issue of *Illinois Heritage (IH)*, there is an article about the historical markers that Brother Joe Hutchison, of Bryner Camp #67 Peoria, has been writing about in the last few issues of the *Railsplitter*. There are even a couple of pictures of Brother Joe included in the *IH* article (see page 9), and he is in uniform and identified as a member of the SUVCW. Well done, Brother Joe. Patriotic Instruction at its finest and welcomed publicity for the Order.

The illustration on the right is both alluring and memorable. At least we hope so. It’ll be discussed in the Spring 2023 *Railsplitter*.

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