

# SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Lt. Commander Edward Lea U.S.N. – Camp No. 2

## Harriet Lane

Sep - Dec 2017

Volume 23

No. 3 – Part 2 of 2

From the Editor

Brothers,

This document is part 2 and final component of the Sep-Dec 2017 issue of the *Harriet Lane* Camp newsletter. It finishes the chronicling of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter activities of the *Lt. Edward Lea USN Camp No. 2*. As we move into the New Year, I expect to return to the normal quarterly publishing schedule. 2018 promises to be another active year for the Camp!

I hope you will join us in promoting the principles of our Order by attending or participating in the various activities and events planned for the coming months. I wish you all a happy and prosperous new year!

In C, F, & L

*Michael Lance* - Editor



### Visit to the African American Civil War Memorial and Museum

**October 11-13, 2017 - Washington, DC**

Originally, the purpose of our trip to Washington, DC was to visit the new *National Museum of African American History & Culture* which opened in 2016. But as the trip planning developed, I realized that this was my opportunity to also visit the *African American Civil War Memorial and Museum*. I had been trying to visit this museum for the last fifteen years. I had previously traveled to Virginia and North Carolina, but could never make it to Washington, DC.

The *African American Civil War Memorial and Museum* is located at 1925 Vermont Ave. NW in Washington, DC. At the center of the memorial monument, in an outdoor granite paved plaza, is the *Spirit of Freedom* sculpture portraying uniformed African-American Civil War soldiers and sailors. The sculpture is encircled on three sides by the *Wall of Honor* that lists the names of 209,145 members of the *United States Colored Troops* - along with 7,000 white officers. The name of my Civil War ancestor, Warren White, is located on Wall C, Plaque 58. He was a member the 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment Company K. My family and I were visiting Washington to represent the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas Sons and Daughters, *United States Colored Troops, Warren W. White Chapter*.

The *National Museum of African American History & Culture* is another place that everyone should visit. It is an awesome collection and representation of the African American experience in this country. The museum chronicles the African American's heroic and largely unknown struggle for freedom. It uses documents, pictures, and other

artifacts - along with state-of-the-art audiovisual displays. The material ranges from the time before slavery to the Civil Rights Movement. The materials and exhibitions presented a total list of people, times and places that shaped this era. We were able to meet with Sec. Gen. Asa Gordon, *Sons & Daughters US Colored Troops* and Dr. Frank Smith, Founding Director of the *CW Memorial Freedom Foundation*.

An afterthought that I have had since visiting this museum and memorial is that I feel closely connected to the Civil War and to my ancestor who fought in it. After the Civil War, my ancestor re-enlisted in the *United States Infantry, 41<sup>st</sup> Regiment Co. C* and became a Buffalo Soldier. While at the museum, I purchased 22 posters and 7 books to add to my collection.



**Brother Steve Holmes (far right) and family at CW monument**

...submitted by Brother Steve Holmes

**Rita L. Coughlin (2 October, 1917 – 26 October, 2017)**

It is with deep sorrow that I report the passing of Rita Coughlin, the mother of *Department of Texas* SVC Thomas Coughlin. She passed away at age 100.



Mrs. Coughlin was a cousin of Cpl. Dennis Breen who served with *Co. H, 34<sup>th</sup> Regt. Massachusetts Infantry*. On June 18, 1864, Cpl. Dennis was 'killed in action' at the Battle of Lynchburg, VA.

Mrs. Coughlin, of Wilmington, MA, was formerly a long-time resident of Worcester, MA and Osterville, MA. She passed away peacefully on October 26, 2017.

She was raised and educated in Webster, MA and was a graduate of St. Louis High School there. Following High School, Rita went on to further her education at Becker Junior College in Worcester and became a bookkeeper following graduation.

In her early years, Rita was very sociable and was voted *Miss Becker Jr. College* and *Miss Old Orchard Beach* in Maine. She married the late John M. Coughlin, Sr., in Webster, MA on August 31, 1940. They became the parents of four children: John Coughlin, Jr. of Worcester, MA; Nancy (Coughlin) Walsh of Parkland, FL; Thomas Coughlin of Sugar Land, TX; and Robert Coughlin of Wilmington, MA.

Mrs. Coughlin was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother who really enjoyed the time she spent with her family. She leaves behind 8 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She was laid to eternal rest at the Massachusetts National Cemetery, beside her husband, Lt. Col. John M. Coughlin.

Many sincere condolences to Brother Coughlin and his family.

Voices of South Texas

**Nov. 4, 2017 – Bayview Cemetery, Corpus Christi, TX**

Old Bayview Cemetery came alive on November 4, 2017 as storytellers, re-enactors and local history experts shared the stories of the people buried in Old Bayview Cemetery in Corpus Christi. The cemetery is the resting place of veterans from the War of 1812 through the Spanish American War – including 7 Union Civil War veterans.

The free walking tour showcased re-enactors portraying real people from South Texas, including war veterans, city founders, and colorful law enforcers. Buffalo Soldiers and other re-enactors gave scholarly presentations.

**Right: Brother Thor Chester with Carol Scott, member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the UDC**



Brothers Thor Chester and Robert Yeager attended the event. Brother Chester read the list of Union veterans buried in the cemetery and also the memorial dedication honoring them. He also offered the dedication to Union veteran George Owens who, after the war, continued to serve as a Buffalo Soldier.



**Left: Brother Thor Chester with Brother Robert Yeager**

*...submitted by Brother Thor Chester*

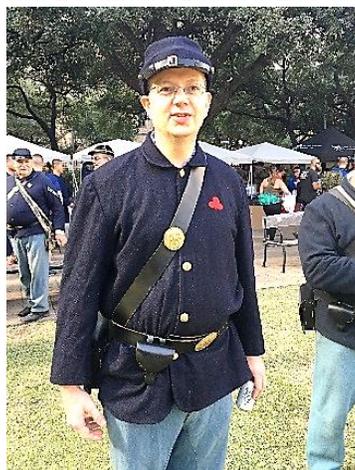
**Saturday, November 11, 2017 – City Hall, Houston, TX**

Houston’s City Hall was surrounded by vintage military vehicles on Veterans Day 2017. Many veterans, heritage organizations, dignitaries, and spectators gathered in front of City Hall and around the Hermann Square Reflection Pond to participate in honoring our Nation’s veterans.



**Some of the vintage military vehicles parked around Houston’s City Hall**

The Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp was represented by several Brothers. They combined with Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf. to



**Zane Hooper, SUCW**

form an Honor Guard. The Honor Guard had the privilege of offering a 3-volley musket salute near the end of the ceremonies to honor all Veterans.

The ESTEM Academy Marine Corps JROTC presented the Colors at the beginning of the program, followed by the *National Anthem*, the *Pledge of Allegiance*, an Invocation, a moment of silence in memory of the signing of the WWI Armistice, the reading of a patriotic poem, and remarks by Mayor Sylvester Turner. The keynote speaker then gave a presentation, followed by the singing of *America the Beautiful*, and a nice performance by a bagpiper.

Then came the 3-volley musket salute, followed by the playing of *Taps* by an excellent bugler. The ROTC unit then retired the Colors.



**Dale Leach & Michael Lance  
Both are members of the  
SUCW & the 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf.**



**Michael Rappe  
SUCW & 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf.  
with his wife, Sarah**

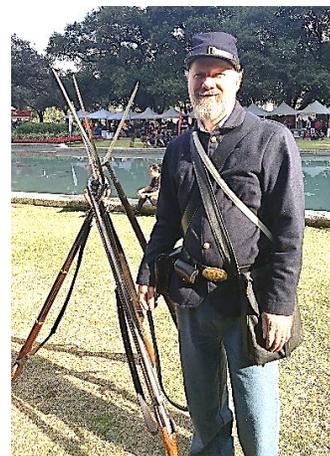


**Musicians Jonathan Tovar & German Orrellano**



**Stephen Duncan, SUCW**

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The members of Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> US Inf. that combined with the Brothers of the Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp to form the impressive Honor Guard included: *clockwise from the upper left:* Glen Camp, Thomas Whitesides (commanding), Howard Rose, Kerry Manning, and Rion Braddock.



The 9/11 Heroes Run, a 5K marathon through the streets of downtown Houston preceded the Veterans Day ceremonies at City Hall. Many of the runners congregated around City Hall after the run to observe the ceremonies.

**Left: Some of the 9/11 Heroes Run participants rest beside the Reflection Pond and observe the Veterans Day ceremony**



**Right: Honor Guard Cmdr. Thomas Whitesides forms up and instructs the unit prior to the musket volleys.**

The first volley was fired with a double-load of powder. Red or blue chalk had been loaded into some of the rifle barrels. Along with the natural white smoke of firing, and the double-load of powder, the first volley was impressive – a massive blast with the resulting visual effect of red, white and blue smoke!

The successive commands by Cmdr. Whitesides and the corresponding mechanics of reloading and firing by the Honor Guard, gave the spectators a good visual example of Civil War era action.



*...Report and photos respectfully submitted by Michael Lance*

*\* Note: Additional event photo on back page*

## Pioneer Day

**Saturday, November 11, 2017 – Jesse Jones Park, Humble, TX**

Following the Veterans Day activities at Houston's City Hall, Brothers Michael Rappe and Michael Lance, along with several members of *Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> US Inf.*, ventured north to Jesse Jones Park in Humble. The park was conducting its annual *Pioneer Day*.



The park was well populated with civilian visitors and living history reenactors. However, the time period featured during this event was pre-Civil War. Brothers Rappe and Lance were quickly drafted into the Soldado ranks (Mexican Army) and slightly altered their uniforms to blend in.

A skirmish soon occurred as the Soldados were called upon to drive off a band of marauding Texians who were raiding a Mexican homestead. All Soldado battle commands were spoken in Spanish, giving the spectators a realistic taste of a violent, if brief, Texas frontier battle.

**Left: Soldados pause briefly during the march to rescue a beleaguered Mexican homestead**

**Right: Brothers Michael Rappe & Michael Lance being indoctrinated as new Soldados**



....Submitted by Michael Lance

## In Memory

**Gus Mistrot (1929 - November 16, 2017)**

"It is with deep sorrow that I report Compatriot Gustave "Gus" Antoine Mistrot III of *Albert Sidney Johnston Camp #67* has passed over the river to rest on the peaceful shores awaiting the arrival of his fellow compatriots at about 8 a.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2017.

Gus, with his constant companion and wife, Bernice, provided invaluable services to our camp and the *Sons of Confederate Veterans* organization. Interment will be in Glenwood Cemetery in Houston beside his parents, grandparents, and great grandmother." .... *Herschel Day, Camp Cmdr., Albert Sidney Johnston Camp #67, SCV, Houston, Texas*

**Gus Mistrot**

Gus Mistrot, who passed away at age 88, was not a member of the *SUVCW*. However, he and his wife were avid family history researchers and friends of our *Order*. Gus served as a Board Member and President of the *Washington Cemetery Historic Trust*. Gus was a proud member of: the *Sons of the American Revolution*; the *General Society of the War of 1812*; *Sons of the Republic of Texas*; *Sons of Confederate Veterans*; and the *Military Order of the Stars and Bars*. He was recently honored by the *Texas Society SAR* for his work over the last 15 years to mark the graves of 200 veterans of the Civil War who are buried in Washington, Glenwood, and Magnolia cemeteries in Houston.

Gus and Bernice Mistrot researched and wrote the biography of Private Edward Duffield, a Federal soldier buried at Washington Cemetery. Private Duffield served with *Co. D, 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Missouri Inf.* and *Co. F, 50<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Missouri Infantry*.

The biography was written for the headstone dedication ceremony that was hosted by the *Sarah Emma Seelye Auxiliary No. 1* on October 22, 2016 at Washington Cemetery. *Auxiliary* President, Vali Reyes, read the moving biography aloud. Members of the *Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp #2, SUVCW* and *Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry* supported the event with a Color Guard and an Honor Guard. While Gus was not present to witness the event due to health issues, Mrs. Mistrot was in attendance. **Note: see Volume 22, Number 4 – the Dec. 2016 issue of the Harriet Lane for the complete report of the event.**



**Bernice Mistrot**

...Submitted by Michael Lance

**November 18-19, 2017 – Liendo Plantation, Hempstead, TX**

The 3-day *Civil War Weekend* event at Liendo Plantation was successful once again this year! The *Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea USN Camp #2* set up their HQ recruiting tent in the usual location, next to the entrance gates to the mansion. Civil War relics, vintage *GAR* postcards, *GAR* and Allied Ladies Orders badges, and other items of interest were on public display inside the tent.

Several Brothers attended each day. Some attended to work at the HQ tent, others came to participate in the daily skirmishes and battle reenactments, and some chose to 'rough it' by staying in the Federal Camps.

Work at HQ included recruiting activities, handing out small US flags to passing children, offering Civil War ancestor search assistance, and generally interacting with event attendees. In addition, raffle tickets were sold for chances to win the beautiful quilt produced and generously donated to the *Camp* by Linda LaBrot. Raffle tickets were also sold for a NCO sword. Ticket sales were brisk.



**Side view of Liendo Plantation**



"Net proceeds from the quilt and sword raffles was \$401 this year. Using our standard 80/20 rule, the quilt went for \$320 and the sword for \$81. It wasn't our best year but a good one. Thanks to all who participated in manning the camp again this year.".....[Secr./Treas. Gary White](#)

**Left: SUVCW Camp HQ and recruiting tent**

The Brothers who attended this year included: Cmdr. William Pollard, SVC Michael Lance, JVC Michael Rappe, Secr./Treas. Gary White, Stephen Schulze PCC, William Martin, Justin Martin, Dale Leach, 'Dusty' Kobs, and Robert Yeager.



**Dale Leach and Michael Lance**



**Cmdr. William Pollard**



**Dusty' Kobs as a Confederate**

*....Continued on next page*

Upon my arrival at Liendo on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, I saw the troops being ordered to fall in as I approached the Federal camp. I figured that some drilling was going to begin, so I quickly assumed a position in the line. The men were then repositioned according to height. I knew that some drilling to practice field maneuvering would be a great idea in order to prepare for the coming battle reenactment.

As we marched out of camp, everyone noticed that we did not head for the open field where drilling was usually conducted. Instead, we marched by double-file the other direction...into the woods...through the brush, over a creek, through some mud, etc. Something was not right. I heard several men wonder out loud "what's going on here?" Soon we came up on a unit of hard-at-work Pioneers. They were chopping and hacking out a path for us. We were forced to halt and wait as the Pioneers feverishly cut brush and small trees and removed fallen logs.

As it turns out, I had inadvertently volunteered for 'tactical' maneuvers, *not* drill practice! This was an activity I had not been exposed to previously. And I quickly discovered that it was an activity for men a lot younger than me! As we moved into open rolling fields, sometimes at the double-quick, my main concern was not the solid sheet of sticker burrs halfway up on (and inside) my pant legs, or the hot humid temperature....but rather my debilitating shortage of breath! Next year, I will be much more selective with my volunteering!

On Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, the Federal troops were divided into 3 work parties. The job at hand was for one work party to move into the woods to chop down small trees with axes and hatchets. The 2<sup>nd</sup> work party was to drag those trees out of the woods and up a hill to hand them off to the 3<sup>rd</sup> work party...which was tasked with dragging the trees to a distant redoubt. This was the position that the Union troops were destined to defend during the upcoming battle. The trees were used to build an abatis in front of the redoubt.



**Right: Brother Dale Leach (on the left) dragging a tree as a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> work party**

The 3 companies of Federal troops were finally marched to the redoubt where a considerable wait was necessary until the Confederates finally attacked. The Union forces ultimately put up a fine defense of the position, thanks in part to the abatis, but were finally overrun by superior numbers of the enemy.



**Michael Rappe – Ready for Battle Inside the SUCW HQ tent**



**Michael Lance waiting for the Confederate attack**



**William and Justin Martin as Confederates**

*...Submitted by Michael Lance*

## Wreaths Across America

**December 16, 2017 – Houston National Cemetery, Houston, TX**

The day was chilly but otherwise perfect for the laying of thousands of wreaths at the graves of Veterans buried at the Houston National Cemetery. The 2017 Houston version of the *Wreaths Across America* was once again very well attended as a multitude of volunteers descended on the cemetery to honor our Veterans. Brothers Michael Rappe and Michael Lance were among the earliest to arrive, representing the *Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War*.

### **Michael Rappe and Michael Lance**

The Camp had purchased 33 wreaths in support of this year's *Wreaths Across America* project. At least twelve of these wreaths were personally laid by the two Brothers. After laying each wreath, they saluted and read each Veteran's name aloud before solemnly advancing to the next grave.

Prior to the wreath laying by Brothers Rappe and Lance and the thousands of other volunteers, heritage organizations, numerous Color Guards, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, several moving speeches were given by dignitaries within the crowded Hemicyle. A highlight of the program was a low-altitude flyover by the *Commemorative Air Force, Houston Wing Flying WWII War Birds*, a squadron of vintage aircraft. Aged veterans of previous wars from all branches of the military were recognized, and ceremonial wreaths were presented. The Houston Highlander Pipe Band also gave a beautiful musical performance. A rifle salute was given by the *First Battalion, 23<sup>rd</sup> Marines*.



**The Hemicyle and surrounding grounds begin to fill as thousands of volunteers arrive**



**Michael Rappe at a grave of a Veteran**



**Wreaths adorn acres of grave markers**

*....Photos and report respectfully submitted by Michael Lance*

**Wednesday, December 27, 2017 – Texas City, TX**

Two authors gave lectures on Wednesday afternoon at the Texas City Museum in Texas City, Texas. Their topics focused on events that took place in or near Texas during the Civil War. Author Andrew Hall spoke about "*Captain Dave Versus the Yankees*", a naval encounter involving blockage runners, and author Ed Cotham Jr. spoke about "*Battle on the Bay: The Civil War Struggle for Galveston*". Both presentations were very interesting and enjoyable.

Mr. Hall and Mr. Cotham are good friends of the *Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea USN Camp*. Camp Cmdr. William Pollard and I were present at the lightly attended presentations. We only wished that more folks could have been present to enjoy these fine talks. Both authors graciously shared their time with everyone present before and after their slide shows - answering questions and sharing tidbits of fact.



**L-R: Authors Ed Cotham Jr. and 'Andy' Hall**



**Andrew Hall presenting**



**Ed Cotham presenting**



**L-R: William Pollard, Andrew Hall, and Michael Lance**



**William Pollard by gun salvaged from the wreck of the USS Westfield**

*....submitted by Michael Lance*

**Answer: Hannibal Hamlin....and....**

Hannibal Hamlin was born in Paris Hill, Maine in 1809. He had a successful career in politics before and after the Civil War. In 1835, two years after earning his license to practice law, he entered politics as a Democrat. He served in the Maine Legislature before serving terms in both houses of the U.S. Congress.

**Hannibal Hamlin**



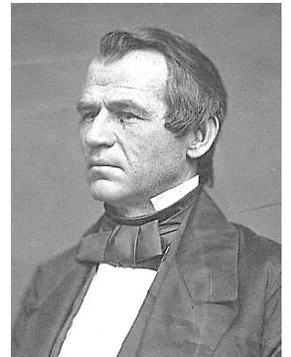
Hamlin was also an ardent abolitionist. He strongly objected to the Democratic Party's support for slavery. So, after Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, he switched over to the newly formed Republican Party.

In 1860, Hamlin was an attractive running mate for Abraham Lincoln because he was from the Northeast and because of his strong views against slavery. Interestingly, Hamlin did not personally meet Lincoln until after the election!

Almost from the beginning of his term as VP, Hamlin pushed hard for an emancipation proclamation. However, He was rarely confided in by the President - and for 2 years, Lincoln delayed issuing the proclamation. In the meantime, Hamlin found other ways to keep active - including rejoining his old Coast Guard unit which was training in Kittery, Maine.

As the national elections approached in 1864, Lincoln feared that without some support from the South, he would not be re-elected to a second term as President. He strongly desired re-election in order to see the war through and save the Union. So, unbeknownst to Hannibal Hamlin, Lincoln switched to favor a southern Democrat as his 2<sup>nd</sup> term Vice-Presidential running mate - one who had previously spoken out against secession - his military governor in Tennessee, U.S. Senator Andrew Johnson.

**Andrew Johnson - 1860**



Hamlin went to the Republican National Convention in 1864 assuming he would be re-nominated for another term as Vice-President. But on the 1<sup>st</sup> roll call, he received only 150 votes to Andrew Johnson's 200 votes. Before the 2<sup>nd</sup> roll call could be conducted, numerous delegates switched over in favor of Johnson - assuring that Lincoln would be running for his 2<sup>nd</sup> term as President with a new running mate.

Hamlin vowed that he had not been personally told by Lincoln of the plan to drop him from the ticket. When one of Hamlin's friends informed him much later that Lincoln had personally told him of his intent, Hamlin reportedly replied, *"I am sorry you told me that."*

During the 1864 campaign, Hamlin was actually asked to campaign for the Lincoln-Johnson ticket. He told his wife, Ellen: *"I had hoped sincerely that they would let me off, but as they do not, I am unwilling to refuse, as they would attribute it to my disappointment, which is not the case."*

**Ellen Vesta Emery Hamlin (1835-1925)**



Lincoln later insisted that he had tried to get Hamlin back into the Senate - reportedly telling him, *"You have not been treated right. It is too bad, too bad. But what can I do? I am tied hand and foot."*

At the inaugural ceremony in 1865, as the outgoing Vice-President, Hamlin was obliged to escort Johnson. Johnson promptly disgraced himself with rambling remarks at the event - apparently in an inebriated state.

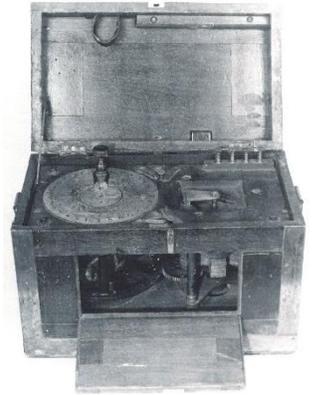
After the war, Hannibal Hamlin went on to serve as a port collector in Boston - and later became president of a small railroad company. In 1869, he went back into politics and served in the U.S. Senate until 1881. Then he served for a year as U.S. minister to Spain before retiring from public life. In his sunset years, Hamlin was a regent for the Smithsonian Institution and a dean at Waterville College in Maine. On July 4, 1891, he passed away while playing cards in a club in Bangor, Maine - on a couch that is still displayed at the Bangor Public Library.

So, as it turned out, the two primary reasons Hamlin was chosen as Lincoln's running mate in 1860 would come to be the primary reasons why Lincoln dropped him in 1864 - being from the Northeast and his strong views against slavery.

*....Respectfully submitted by Brother Michael Lance*

## Beardslee Patent Magneto-Electric Field Telegraph

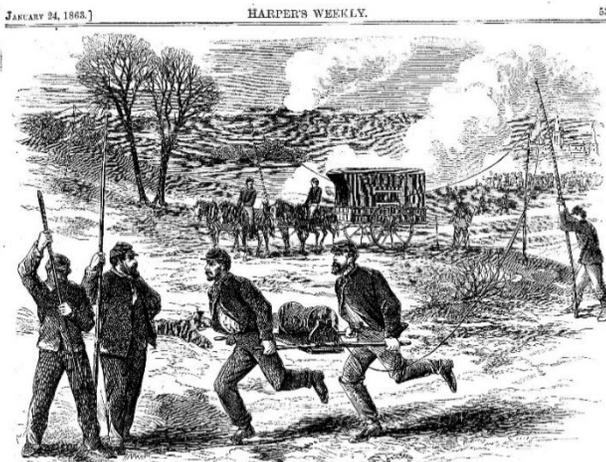
In the *Peninsula Campaign* of 1862, the *U.S. Signal Corps* utilized a new machine developed by George W. Beardslee to enhance communications between the Union forces. It was called the *Beardslee Patent Magneto-Electric Field Telegraph Machine*. This device used a hand-cranked generator to make its own power, thus no battery was required. The magnetos in the generator produced the power needed to send electricity over telegraph wires. The Beardslee was fairly compact and portable – weighing less than 100 pounds – and could be set up almost anywhere. And, best of all, it could be operated by men without knowledge of Morse code.



**Beardslee Telegraph**

To send a message, the operator turned a switch from "O" (off) to "T" (transmit), and then moved a pointer to select letters on a dial. On the other end of the line, a bell announced incoming messages. The receiving operator then switched to "R" and read the letters the pointer indicated as the dial moved to the corresponding letter positions. The receiving operator only needed to copy down the characters he saw "dialed".

Beardslees used light copper lines coated with rubbery gutta percha – instead of the traditional heavy bare wires. Signalmen would set up one Beardslee, while a second machine moved ahead with the army by wagon, trailing the copper wire. All the while, messages could travel back and forth.



The messages sent by the Beardslee was much more secure than those sent via the Morse system. One could not simply "tap" and listen in without having another Beardslee machine – with a synchronized receiving dial.

In practice, however, this new device had several drawbacks, including a slow transmission rate, a higher error rate than the magnetic telegraph, and a limited transmission range. The machines could transmit only about 5-8 miles. And if the dials of the sending and receiving Beardslees became unsynchronized, the transmitted messages would be mangled.

The Beardslee also required a lot of maintenance. And, if repairs were needed, the machine had to be sent to New York to be serviced. To make matters worse, this new device was not readily accepted by the professional telegraphic community.

It seems Beardslee operators had to do more than just turn the lever to the correct character on the dial. They had to follow a series of steps and procedures to successfully operate the machine - *all the Beardslee operators along a given telegraph circuit* - in order for messages to be sent properly. Some operators complained that the Beardslee was too complicated and not as easy to learn as promised. Some considered it an "expensive failure". It was demonstrated repeatedly that trained operators using a conventional telegraph system could send messages faster than most, if not all, operators using a Beardslee machine. This is due, in part, to the fact that the Beardslee operators were never allowed to gain a similar familiarity with its operation as did the conventional telegraph operators with their telegraph equipment.

### **Beardslee telegraph dial and pointer**

Several instruments could not work easily on a single circuit. But, when under fire on the field of battle, where the attention of the receiver might be disturbed, the Beardslee telegraph, as used by the Signal Corps during the Civil War, was claimed to be as good an instrument as had been yet devised. While it has been described as both a success and a failure, most agree that taken as a whole system - using light lances, insulated wire, and reels, it was the most deployable communications system, and was capable of operation in all weather and over all terrain. In late 1863, all of the Beardslee machines were removed from service. However, the poles, insulated wire, wire reels, and wire laying methods were adopted for use for the duration of the war.



*...Respectfully submitted by Brother Michael Lance*

The *Medal of Honor* is the USA's highest military honor, awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. It was first awarded during the Civil War after President Lincoln signed a bill containing a provision for the medal for the Navy on December 21, 1861. It was "to be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen, and Marines as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry and other seamanlike qualities during the present war."

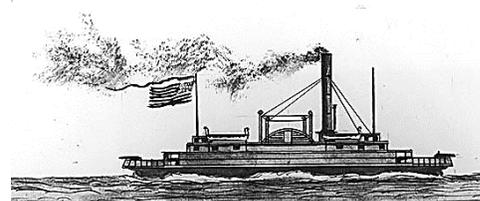


**Left: Navy Version of the original Medal of Honor (1862)**

*With this issue of the Harriet Lane, in honor of Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea USN - the namesake of our Camp, I am continuing to present a review of the recipients of the Medal of Honor who served in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War....editor*

- **Patrick Colbert** – Coxswain. Patrick Colbert was born in Ireland in 1842. He later enlisted into the U.S. Navy and served on the *USS Commodore Hull*. In 1862, this vessel was a ferryboat that was acquired by the Union Navy and outfitted as a gunboat, then assigned to the Union blockade. Patrick Colbert received a Medal of Honor for bravery during combat for his action aboard the *USS Commodore Hull* during the Capture of Plymouth, NC on October 31, 1864. He passed away January 19, 1877 at about age 35 and his remains are interred at the Mount Elliott Cemetery in Michigan. His brief Medal of Honor citation reads simply:

*"Served on board the U.S.S. Commodore Hull at the capture of Plymouth, 31 October 1864."*



**USS Commodore Hull  
Artwork by Erik Heyl, 1962**

- **Thomas E. Corcoran** - Landsman. Thomas Corcoran was born in Dublin, Ireland on October 12, 1839. On May 12, 1861, one month after the start of the Civil War, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy from New York for a 3-year term of service. He was initially assigned to the *USS North Carolina* as a landsman, but later transferred to the *USS Santee* – where he reached the rank of Able Seaman.

Because the crew of the *USS Santee* began to fall ill with scurvy, Corcoran was discharged from the Navy on September 10, 1862 – less than half-way through his enlistment. He re-enlisted the next month, on October 22, again for a 3-year term. This time he was posted as a landsman on the *USS Cincinnati* for service on the upper Mississippi River.

On May 27, 1863, during the Siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi, the *Cincinnati* was ordered to steam down the Mississippi river to destroy 2 Confederate artillery guns which were impeding the advance of General William Tecumseh Sherman's right flank. However, between the *Cincinnati* and the two Confederate guns was a high bluff that was controlled by an 11-piece Confederate heavy artillery battery. From its position on the bluff, this battery had command over a wide stretch of the river – including the path to be traveled by the *Cincinnati*. The Union forces had been aware of the battery, but, shortly before the *Cincinnati* received its orders, the battery had disappeared - and was assumed to have been moved elsewhere. Unbeknownst to the Federals, the battery's guns had been removed from view by simply lowering them from their carriages - both to protect them from the fire of ships on the river and to deceive the Union forces. The Rebel battery commander somehow discovered the Union signal code. So when he intercepted a message describing the *Cincinnati's* mission, he had the guns re-assembled during the night and concealed them in brush.



**Thomas E. Corcoran (b. 1839 – d. 1904)**

On the morning of May 27, *Cincinnati* headed downstream and reached its target, the 2 Confederate artillery guns. Just as it fired its first shots, the hidden battery on the bluff also opened fire, completely surprising the Union ship. The first Confederate shell scored a direct hit, passing through *Cincinnati's* magazine and exiting through the bottom of the ship. Another shell disabled the ship's steering mechanism. *Cincinnati's* own guns could not be elevated enough to return fire on the high battery. Knowing his ship was doomed, the commander, Lt. George M. Bache, headed *Cincinnati* full-steam back up the river in search of a place on which to beach the ship. After a suitable spot was found, the *Cincinnati* was run aground. A hawser line was tied to a tree and a gangplank was laid out. However, before the men could evacuate, the hawser came loose and the ship slipped from the bank and drifted out into the river, where it began to sink in about 18 feet of water. Many of the crew, including the commander, could not swim.

*...Continued on next page*

Those who could, including Corcoran, began to abandon ship. Still under intense fire, Corcoran and 3 others, swam back and forth, helping crewmates to shore. They then re-boarded the *Cincinnati*, hastily repaired a small boat which had been damaged by the Confederate fire, and loaded it with men who were too badly wounded to be dragged through the water. After Lieutenant Bache also climbed into the boat, they towed it to the safety of a Union flotilla. The other three swimmers and 2 more crewmen also received the medal for their part in the action. After the sinking of *Cincinnati*, Corcoran was transferred to the *USS Lexington* to finish out his term of service. His citation reads:

*"Served on board the U.S.S. Cincinnati during the attack on the Vicksburg batteries and at the time of her sinking. Engaging the enemy in a fierce battle, the Cincinnati, amidst an incessant fire of shot and shell, continued to fire her guns to the last, though so penetrated by shellfire that her fate was sealed. Serving bravely during this action, Corcoran was conspicuously cool under the fire of the enemy, never ceasing to fight until this proud ship went down, "her colors nailed to the mast."*

- **Peter Cotton** – Ordinary Seaman. Peter Cotton was born in New York, New York in 1839. He later enlisted into the United States Navy and served on the *U.S.S. Baron De Kalb*. He participated in the 4-day Yazoo River expedition, which occurred from December 23 to 27, 1862. He was honored with a Medal of Honor award on April 3, 1863.

***USS Baron DeKalb, an Eads class ironclad***

The Yazoo Pass Expedition was a joint operation of Major General Ulysses S. Grant's *Army of the Tennessee* and Rear Admiral David D. Porter's *Mississippi River Squadron* in the Vicksburg Campaign.



- **Alexander Crawford** – Fireman. Alexander Crawford was born in 1842 in Pennsylvania. He served as a fireman on the *USS Wyalusing* during the Civil War. On May 25, 1864, while the *Wyalusing* was sailing the Roanoke River, Crawford and 4 other crewmembers volunteered for a mission to destroy the Confederate ironclad *CSS Albemarle*. The mission failed, but the men evaded capture and eventually made it back to the *Wyalusing*. For their actions, the 5 men each received the Medal of Honor. Alexander Crawford died March 17, 1886 and was buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His citation reads:

*"On board the U.S.S. Wyalusing, Crawford volunteered May 25, 1864, in a night attempt to destroy the rebel ram Albemarle in the Roanoke River. Taking part in a plan to explode the rebel ram Albemarle, Crawford executed his part in the plan with perfection, but upon being discovered, was forced to abandon the plan and retire leaving no trace of the evidence. After spending two hazardous days and nights without food, he gained the safety of a friendly ship and was then transferred back to the Wyalusing. Though the plan failed his skill and courage in preventing detection were an example of unflinching devotion to duty."*



***USS Wyalusing – a double-ended, side-wheel gunboat***

- **Thomas Cripps** – Quartermaster. Thomas Cripps was born November 29, 1840 in Philadelphia, PA. He served in the Union Navy during the Civil War as a Quartermaster on the *USS Richmond*. He was awarded the Medal of Honor on December 31, 1864 for his bravery during the naval assault on Mobile Bay, Alabama on August 5, 1864. His citation reads:

*"As captain of a gun on board the U.S.S. Richmond during action against rebel forts and gunboats and with the ram Tennessee in Mobile Bay, 5 August 1864. Despite damage to his ship and the loss of several men on board as enemy fire raked her decks, Cripps fought his gun with skill and courage throughout a furious 2-hour battle which resulted in the surrender of the rebel ram Tennessee and in the damaging and destruction of batteries at Fort Morgan."*

*....to be continued*



The Reflection Pond in front of Houston's City Hall provides a stunning mirror image of the flag-draped building.

The speaker's podiums and spectator seating is located by the front entrance steps.

Around the perimeter of the grounds – just beyond the grassy areas surrounding the three other sides of the Reflection Pond - numerous temporary booths had been erected by various vendors and other service organizations.

An Honor Guard consisting of members of the Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea USN Camp #2, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf. were positioned on the grassy area at the left of the Reflection Pond. This combined unit provided a 3-volley musket salute at the end of the ceremonies in honor of all our Nation's Veterans.



*“If anything be treason, is not levying war upon the United States treason?”*

**Andrew Johnson**

*(Spoken prior to becoming Abraham Lincoln's Vice-Presidential nominee)*

(b. 1808 Raleigh, North Carolina - d. 1875 near Elizabethton, Ohio)

Mayor, Tennessee Congressman, U.S. Vice-President, U.S. Senator

**17<sup>th</sup> U.S. President (1865-1869)**