



The Union Army Balloon Corps was launched in 1861 and played a role in several battles but was deflated two years later. See page 3.



C.K. PIER BADGER CAMP # 1

SERIES 2020

## CAMP ORDERS

JULY 2020

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

### FIRST COMMANDER; NEWEST MEMBERS

*The Camp on July 11 initiated its two newest members at the grave of its first commander, George A. Shaughnessy, at Calvary Cemetery. All of us stand in an unbroken line of patriots from Shaughnessy in 1901 to the new Brothers Peter Keepman and Anthony Maresca.*



**By Steve Michaels, PCinC**

In 1901, George Alexander Shaughnessy could not have imagined that members of his Sons Camp would stand at his grave 119 years later and hold an SUVCW initiation.

It also may have been difficult for George to imagine serving as our Camp's first Commander. C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 was the result of the merger of Badger Camp #1 and C.K. Pier Camp #35 in December 1901. George was

one of the new Camp's charter members. There were several charter members who already had been commanders of one of those two Camps, and one or two had been Department Commander.

George had joined C.K. Pier Camp #35 less than four years earlier, in February 1898.

*Continued on page 2*

**We will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, Aug. 12, to act on applications for membership and transfers into the Camp. We hope to resume regular meetings in September at the Lions Clubhouse, 7336 St. James St., Wauwatosa.**

C.K. PIER BADGER CAMP # 1

# SUVCW

# THE STORY OF OUR CC GEORGE SHAUGHNESSY

*Continued from page 1*

George Alexander Shaughnessy was born Jan. 21, 1853, in Wausau, to George Shaughnessy Sr. and Margaret Woodraff (nee Dalrymple), both Irish immigrants. The elder George enlisted as a private in Co. G, 12<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry in June 1861. Three years later, he died of disease at Big Shanty, Ga. He is buried at the Marietta National Cemetery in Georgia. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/3956307/george-shaughnessy>

Ever since he was a teenager, the younger George had worked as a carpenter. In May 1878, at age 25, he married Theresa Killmaier, a daughter of German immigrants, in Milwaukee. Theresa had grown up in Beaver Dam, and her father also was a carpenter, so the couple lived in Beaver Dam for about a dozen years. After Theresa's parents passed away, the couple returned to Milwaukee.

After the Third Ward fire of 1892 and the Financial Panic of 1893, George saw an opportunity. Despite heavy losses in the area, he started a confectionary business in 1893. That business became a grocery store on what is now East St. Paul Avenue on the northern edge of the Third Ward.

At the first Camp 1 election, held in late November 1901, Shaughnessy was nominated by Henry Goldsmith, seconded by PDC Albert G. Braband. He was unopposed for the office. In 1902, in addition to leading a fledgling Camp and running a business, his only daughter was born.

He remained a member of the Sons and Camp 1 for the rest of his life. He died on June 17, 1911, at the age of 58 and was buried at Milwaukee's Calvary Cemetery. A huge family stone was installed. His wife died the next year. They left their 9-year old daughter, Edna.

*From Milwaukee city directories, marriage records, and family records found on ancestry.com; C.K. Pier Camp #35 membership ledger, 1889-1901*

## REMEMBERING COL. PIER: AT HARPER'S FERRY

*These monthly articles about our Camp namesake are written by PCinC Steve Michaels. This item first was published in the July 2000 Camp orders.*

As C.K. Pier's three-month service in Co. I, 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, was coming to an end, the regiment was marching into Virginia. On Aug. 21, 1861, he wrote:

"Today we marched through a very fine country, and encamped at Harper's Ferry about 3 o'clock p.m. I said the country was fine, by which I meant the scenery was exceedingly romantic, and the crops look well. But the roads are very rough, stony, and seem almost incessantly up and down hills and mountains. Fruit seems plenty, yet unripe ... We are encamped nearly a mile from the Ferry and expect to move over tomorrow.

"On a hill to our right the secessionists had planted a battery of four large cannon and had cut away the trees, and prepared to give us a warm reception ... When they left the place, not having time enough, they spiked the guns and left them where they still remain. I understand on all the heights around, cannon are planted, and it seems to me nothing but a regular siege, starve out, could have driven them from Harper's Ferry had they chosen to remain.

"... The papers have long told long stories of the destruction in this place (Harper's Ferry town) but no one can hardly realize how it looks, until you see it yourself. Whole acres of ruins; from one end of town to the other; you see piles of blackened machinery, gun barrels, locks, etc. It is the same with the scenery and location, or position of the town; one might describe it without end, and then the hearer would not know or fully realize how it looks; you must come and see for yourself."

*From Trewloc Letter XIV, August 21 and 22, 1861*



As the ritual instructs, Anthony Maresca, left, and Peter Keeman grasp the flag. Holding the Bible was Charlie Scheuing-Rademacher, who joined his Mom to retrieve our Memorial Day flags.





## THE BALLOON CORPS

BY PETER KEEPMAN



Between October 1861 and August 1863, the Union Army Balloon Corps played an innovative role in promoting aerial reconnaissance as a wartime tool.

Established via a personal directive of President Abraham Lincoln, the Balloon Corps was headed by an already famous civilian aeronaut, Thaddeus S.C. Lowe. The Corps consisted of seven hydrogen gas-powered balloons and eight aeronauts, and was based at Fort Corcoran, Va.

The largest of the balloons were capable of holding five people, or four plus a telegraph machine. In the field, the balloons were filled using portable hydrogen gas generators that Lowe had modified for ease of transport.

Long before the Civil War, the United States had taken an interest in aeronautics. In June 1783, French brothers Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier conducted the first demonstration of a riderless hot air balloon flight. Present to witness the experiment were Benjamin Franklin, 16-year-old John Quincy Adams and several members of the Adams and John Jay families.

Franklin is quoted as saying afterwards that the balloon “might be used for elevating an engineer to take a view of the enemy’s army and for conveying intelligence into a besieged town.”

The use of balloons for military reconnaissance was discussed during the Seminole War in Florida in the 1830s, and during the Mexican War in 1846-’48, but no action was ever taken. It would take Lowe’s daring experiment in the spring of 1861 for the value of aeronautics to be fully realized.

He made a flight from Cincinnati, Ohio, and crash-landed in Unionville, S.C., 650 miles away. Unfortunately for Lowe, this was just one week after the fall of Fort Sumter. Lowe was briefly held by local authorities on suspicion of being a Union spy, but his reputation as a “professor” of aeronautics saved him from permanent internment. Lowe technically was the first prisoner taken by the Confederacy during the Civil War.

Having heard of his exploits, Lincoln became interested in Lowe’s work and its potential for wartime reconnaissance. Starting on June 11, 1861, Lowe conducted several demonstrations for Lincoln, doing tethered ascents in front of the Columbian Armory (site of what is now the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.). A week later, Lowe sent the first-ever air-to-land telegram to Lincoln, watching from below.

With Lincoln’s approval, the Balloon Corps

was formed and saw action at the Battle of First Bull Run in July 1861. Lowe piloted the balloon only to encounter a throng of retreating Union troops who began firing on it and demanding that he identify himself.

At later engagements, the Balloon Corps proved more successful. Lowe often found that the mere presence of his balloons were enough to thwart Confederate troop movements because they went to great lengths to conceal their troops from the watchers. Lowe’s balloons proved invaluable during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign near Yorktown, Va., and the Battle of Island No. 10 from Feb. 28 to April 8, 1862. Later, they would be crucial in securing Union victories at the Battles of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks) and Mechanicsville, respectively.

Notably, in August 1863, civilian corpsman John Steiner gave a balloon ride to none other than Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin, who was a Union observer. Zeppelin would later cite that experience as the one that inspired him to create the rigid self-powered airship that bore his name.

All the while, Lowe had gained the approval of Gen. George McClellan, who gave credit to “Professor Lowe, the intelligent and enterprising aeronaut,” saying in his official reports, “I was greatly indebted for the valuable information obtained during his ascensions.”

Lowe continued to reward the Union with new wartime innovations. The first instance of an “aircraft” carrier being used in modern warfare came on Aug. 3, 1861, when the USS Fanny, formally a transport ship and gunboat, was used to transport a balloon. Aeronaut John La Mountain rose from the deck of the Fanny to observe Confederate shore positions at Hampton Roads, Va.

But by 1863, the interest in the Union Balloon Corps fell, coinciding with Lincoln’s increasing frustration with its supporter, McClellan. The Corps was disbanded in August of that year.

The first Confederate balloon was constructed in spring 1862 by Capt. John Randolph Bryan. Made of varnished cotton rather than silk, the balloon was powered by hot air, because the Confederates lacked hydrogen generators. Later, Confederate artillery Gen. Edward Porter Alexander made a number of ascents during the Seven Days Campaign (June 25 to July 1, 1862, near Richmond, Va.). Ultimately, however, finances prevented further development and, as Gen. James Longstreet put it, “We longed for the balloons that poverty denied us.”

# 45th anniversary in Sons for Rich Beggs

As a boy in Clintonville, Wis., Rich Beggs was fascinated by an old rifle that his father kept in the rafters of his store. When it finally was given to him on his 16th birthday, he began to research it – and discovered it was used by his own relative in 1864.

That began Beggs' love of all things about the Civil War. Two decades later, he joined the SUVCW in 1975 and is Camp 1's longest-tenured member. He will hit his 45th anniversary on Aug. 1.

The gun proved to be an 1864 Springfield used by his great-grandfather, Pvt. James Beggs of the 5th Wisconsin Infantry, who served from Aug. 25, 1864, to June 20, 1865. James was from Almond in Portage County and enlisted with his brother, Albert, who was killed on April 2, 1865, the last day of the siege at Petersburg and one week before Lee surrendered to Grant.

Beggs had not known about his heritage until that point, and "my family knew little about it,

either." An 1864 letter from James was in a box somewhere, but "they were not genealogy buffs so they had no appreciation of it."

Beggs is a 1959 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and served until 1986, and was captain of the USS Macdonough, a guided missile destroyer that had a crew of nearly 400.

In 1975, "I was in Washington, D.C., and went to a Civil War re-enactment at Fort Ward in Alexandria, Va. A guy there told me about the Sons."

He soon joined as an at-large member in Wisconsin, and was assigned to Camp 1 about 15 years later.

Beggs became a dual member with Camp 8 in the late 1990s.



Rich Beggs

## CIVIL WAR TRIVIA

**Q:** What was noteworthy about Confederate Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk?

**A:** Polk was an 1827 graduate of West Point, and when the war began, he was the Episcopal bishop of Louisiana. He traveled to Richmond to meet with his old friend, Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis commissioned him a major general, even though Polk had never held a command and had been away from military life for more than 30 years. Polk was killed in action in 1864 during the Atlanta Campaign. More at <https://www.historynet.com/leonidas-polk-southern-civil-war-general.htm> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonidas\\_Polk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonidas_Polk)

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 3 – Tom Ludka
- 8 – Tom Trimble
- 11 – Bill Liebert
- 15 – Ed Deutsch
- 20 – John Thielmann
- 23 – Bruce Nason
- 28 – Rich Beggs



## CAMP CALENDAR

**In the pre-pandemic world, we would be previewing Camp activities and events here. For now, we continue to offer a bonus trivia about diseases:**

**Q:** What were the medical issues Bronze John, breakbone, cold plague, delirium tremens and lues venera?

**A:** Bronze John was yellow fever. See the rest and more at <https://history.osu.edu/exhibitions/cwsurgeon/cwsurgeon/medicalterms> and [http://sites.rootsweb.com/~kylawten/LCM\\_CW\\_Diseases.htm](http://sites.rootsweb.com/~kylawten/LCM_CW_Diseases.htm)

**Camp Commander – Brian Craig**  
(414) 418-9776

**SVC – PDC Tom Brown (414) 429-8979**

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and <http://www.suvcw-wi.org>

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