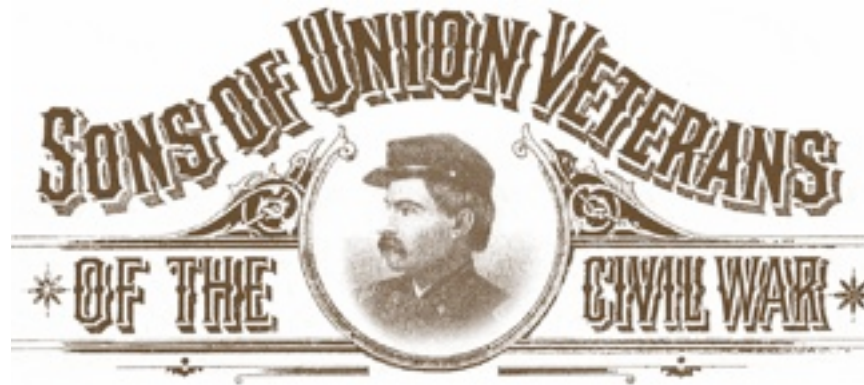


**Earning a
footnote in
history at
Vicksburg**

The unheralded 23rd Wisconsin Infantry was part of an action on May 22, 1863, for which seven men in other units received the Medal of Honor. See page 2 and the special insert.

C.K. PIER BADGER CAMP #1

SUVCW



C.K. PIER BADGER CAMP # 1

SERIES 2021

CAMP ORDERS

MARCH 2021

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

PLANS FINALLY GETTING A SHOT IN THE ARM



The First Brigade Band marched with us on Memorial Day in 2019. A few members have asked to play at our private mini-commemoration on May 30, and we hope for bigger events and a further easing of the pandemic.

Slowly but surely, the Camp is beginning to build a schedule of safe, small gatherings as vaccinations against the coronavirus grow and grow in Wisconsin.

We all look forward to this trend continuing, and for the world to get back to normal with larger events.

But first, I must say the Patriotic Function, which was held via videoconference on Feb. 6, was a huge success, as you read in last month's Camp Orders. Especially so, when you consider it was

**From the
Commander –
Brian Craig**

our first event of its kind in this format. And because we really had short time-frame to pull the whole thing together.

Truly, I had been skeptical of being able to create out of thin air an event that would have such success. But we have geniuses in our camp that can make something out of nothing, and do magic tricks with the Internet. Grant Johnson, Kent Peterson and Steve Michaels worked endlessly to make the event a possibility.

We had people watching from all over the state, a few from distant states

Continued on page 4

We again will meet on the Zoom videoconference platform at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 14. PCC Tom Mueller will have the patriotic presentation.

23RD WISCONSIN WAS IN VICKSBURG MOH ACTION

By Tom Mueller, PCC

Some members of a Wisconsin infantry regiment were closely involved in a Medal of Honor incident at Vicksburg on May 22, 1863, according to a tidbit found in a recent book on the massive battle.

Six members of the Chicago Mercantile Battery received the MOH for hauling a small artillery piece up a steep slope while under heavy fire and shooting it at point-blank range into a Confederate lunette. So did Cpl. Winthrop Davis Putnam of the 77th Illinois Infantry, who lent a hand, wound up at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home and is buried at Wood National Cemetery.

Early next morning, the regiment pushed forward to Black River Bridge, where line of battle was promptly formed, and the brigade, advancing directly upon the rebel works, captured the Sixtieth Tennessee, with its colors. On the 19th of May, the division advanced to within three miles of the works in the rear of Vicksburg. The two following days were occupied in obtaining position in front of the fortifications. Several casualties occurred on the 20th. On the 22d, the regiment took part in the grand assault. Under a very destructive fire, they advanced

with great gallantry, until, at one, in the afternoon, they had forced their way to the outer slope of one of the rebel forts. Here farther progress was arrested by a deep ditch, which was impassable. In this position the regiment, unable to scale the walls of the fort, lay during the afternoon, and until withdrawn in the evening. It should also be noted that, during the afternoon, companies B and E were detached from the regiment, under orders to place a piece of artillery in position near the fort. This service they performed in the most gallant manner, drawing the piece by hand, through ravines and over steep hills, to a point within twenty yards of the rebel line, where they kept it supplied with ammunition during the engagement.

E.B. Quiner's 1866 history of Wisconsin units discusses battle action by the 23rd Infantry Regiment on May 22, 1863. More than 30 years after Vicksburg, the Medal of Honor was awarded to seven participants from other units.

The new book says, in a very brief passage based on official Army records, that some members of the 23rd Wisconsin Infantry helped do this, too. So the unheralded 23rd is a footnote within a heroic footnote in Vicksburg history.

The Chicago Mercantile Battery, Putnam's 77th Illinois and the 23rd Wisconsin all were in 10th

Continued in special insert

REMEMBERING COL. PIER: LEADING A NEW YORK UNIT

These monthly articles about our Camp namesake are written by PCinC Steve Michaels. This item first was published in the March 2001 Camp Orders.

On March 24, 1865, Lt. Col. C.K. Pier was detached from his 38th Wisconsin Infantry and placed in command of the 109th New York Infantry. The Binghamton Regiment had been in service since August 1862 and had lost all of its field officers.

During the previous year, the 109th had fought at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. The troops held their previous commanders in the highest esteem – they were larger-than-life heroes, with fighting records hard to match.

The first, Col. Benjamin Tracy, had organized the 109th. At the Battle of the Wilderness, he seized the colors, leading the regiment when other units had retired. He then re-formed his line and held it.

The second, Col. Isaac Catlin, rallied disorganized troops at Petersburg. He was disabled by a severe wound, but while being carried from the field, recovered somewhat and bravely started to return to command. He received a second wound, which necessitated amputation of his right leg.

Three decades later, both men received the Medal of Honor for their actions.

The New Yorkers doubted that anyone could take the place of Tracy or Catlin, and they let their indignant feelings be known. It was into this trying situation that Pier was placed.

The next day, he was called on to lead the men in the battle of Fort Stedman. His coolness and bravery were conspicuous and won the respect and confidence of most of the officers and men. As the Petersburg Campaign and the Appomattox Campaign ended, Pier became very popular with the New Yorkers. At the end of the war, the officers and men presented him with a handsome horse and saddle. They insisted he accompany them to Elmira for mustering out.

From April 22 to 27, he marched with them as far as Washington, D.C. On April 30, he was detailed to serve as president of a general court martial there.

From New York in the War of Rebellion, 1861-1865, edited by Frederick Phisterer, Albany, N.Y., 1912; New York Civil War Medal of Honor Recipients, provided by the U.S. Army Center of Military History; and The History of Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin, published by Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1880



LINCOLN'S AVENGER
 COMPILED BY JVC GRANT JOHNSON



The vastness and longevity of the Civil War created many heroes and folks who became famous because of it. Arguably, many more are lost to the annals of history; their contributions overlooked and lost in time.

Boston Corbett is one such individual.

He was born in London on Jan. 29, 1832, and at the age of 7, his family came to New York City. His wife and child died in childbirth, and he moved to Boston. Corbett was despondent over the loss of his family and began drinking heavily. Reformers persuaded him to swear off alcohol and join the Methodist Church, and he changed his name to Boston after being baptized.

He grew his hair long to imitate Christ and became a street preacher, condemning sinners around the city. He would set up an impromptu pulpit on a street corner and when criticized or confronted, he put his brawling skills to use and took on all comers.

Corbett's rash tendencies exhibited themselves in strange ways. On July 16, 1858, while he was ministering, Corbett was ogled by a pair of prostitutes. In order to avoid sexual temptation and remain holy, he went home and castrated himself with a pair of scissors. He then ate a meal and went to a prayer meeting before seeking medical treatment.

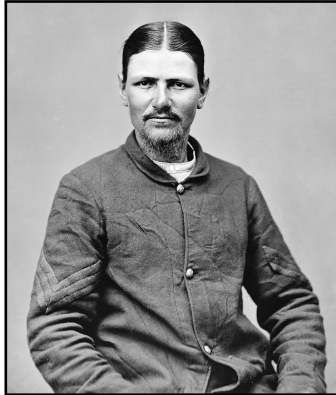
In 1861, amid the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, Corbett enlisted in Company I of the 12th Regiment New York Militia. Corbett was not an ideal soldier. He carried his Bible and never missed an opportunity to scold his fellow soldiers – including superiors – for profanity or other sinful behaviors. He was courtmartialled and expelled from service.

But his actions were discharged, and he re-enlisted later that month as a private in the 16th New York Cavalry. On June 24, 1864, he was captured at Culpeper, Va., and held at Andersonville but released in an exchange five months later (he later testified for the prosecution in the trial of the commandant of Andersonville, Capt. Henry Wirz, who would be hanged in November 1865).

Corbett's place in history came in April 1865. Lincoln was assassinated, his killer was on the loose and officials in Washington were apoplectic. The manhunt included 26 Union soldiers from the 16th New York Cavalry, led by Lt. Edward P. Doherty, in

pursuit of John Wilkes Booth. Corbett was one of them.

When the soldiers found Booth holed up in a barn nearly two weeks after Lincoln was killed, they flushed him out by setting it on fire. Corbett shot the fleeing Booth in the neck, and the assassin died within two hours.



Boston Corbett was the soldier who killed John Wilkes Booth but led a life marked by bizarre tendencies.

As Corbett explained it: "I aimed at his body. I did not want to kill him ... I think he stooped to pick up something just as I fired. That may probably account for his receiving the ball in the head. When the assassin lay at my feet, a wounded man, and I saw the bullet had taken effect about an inch back of the ear, and I remembered that Mr. Lincoln was wounded about the same part of the head, I said: 'What a God we have ... God avenged Abraham Lincoln.'"

He collected part of the reward for Booth due to his swift action. But Corbett did not live happily ever after.

Corbett went back to work as a hat-maker in Boston, then moved to Danbury, Conn., and by 1870, he was in Camden, N.J., where he was known as a "Methodist lay preacher." He was routinely fired because of his habit of stopping work to pray for co-workers.

In an effort to earn money, Corbett capitalized on his role as "Lincoln's Avenger." He gave lectures about the shooting of Booth to Sunday schools, women's groups and tent meetings.

R.B. Hoover, who befriended him, recalled that Corbett believed "men who were high in authority at Washington at the time of the assassination" were hounding him, angry because he had deprived them of prosecuting and executing Booth. He became fearful that "Booth's Avengers" were planning to seek revenge upon him. As his paranoia increased, Corbett began brandishing his pistol at friends or strangers he deemed suspicious.

Today, no one knows what happened to him. He said he planned to go to Mexico. Some theorize that he perished in the massive Great Hinckley Fire in Minnesota in 1894.

The search for his final history is clouded, however, because many imposters claimed to be "Lincoln's Avenger" after Corbett disappeared.

SPRING, VACCINATIONS BRING SOME OPTIMISM

Continued from page 1

and even one in Germany.

Now is the time to move ahead and be planning for the summer. Due to the state of the world as of yet, many large events such as parades are likely to be cancelled again this year. President Joe Biden aims to have things safe enough for small backyard gatherings on the Fourth of July, but nothing bigger. So the parade that we marched in on that day is not likely.

But it is springtime now, and there are signs of resurgence for trees, plants, lawns – and our schedule.

Several of us have been fully vaccinated, and so we are looking to get back to face-to-face meetings come May or June. We hope it will be May, but will wait to see what the restrictions are at the time.

A couple months ago, we cancelled the big Memorial Day celebration that would have been held on May 31 and attended by 400 or so people, led by Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome Listeki.

However, we will have a small, private Decoration Day event on Sunday, May 30. This will be held at Calvary Cemetery, the same as always, and will

continue our unbroken string of commemorations for Memorial Day. That began nearly a century ago, in 1927, and probably even before that.

Last year's mini-event was kind of lonely, but this year will not be that way – some members of the First Brigade Band have come to us and offered to play several patriotic tunes. They miss the bigger event, too!!!

We, of course, all will be in masks, and socially distanced as required. Our gathering is not being advertised beyond the SUVCW.

We also will have a great, profound but private dedication ceremony at Wood National Cemetery on May 22. More about that in next month's newsletter.

And the Department Encampment will be face-to-face in June. Plus, the Menomonee Falls Historical Society has told us that its Civil War Weekend Encampment is proceeding, set for July 17-18. That was held a year ago, too, one of the few events that actually was held.

So a safer world, and spring, are just over the horizon. Stay safe, everybody, and we will be back, better than ever, teaching and practicing Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty!!!

CIVIL WAR

TRIVIA

Q: What were a glacis and a loophole?

A: These involve fortifications. A glacis was a gentle slope leading up to the ditch in front of the fortification – created to prevent attackers from having cover while approaching the ditch. A loophole was an opening in the fortification through which small arms could be fired. More at <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/glossary-fortification-terms>

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

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- 9 – Mikko Lagunero
- 13 – Dave Howard



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<https://www.facebook.com/CKPierBadger>
and <http://www.suvcw-wi.org>

Report address changes to editor Tom Mueller, PCC, at thewisconsin3800@gmail.com
Your Banner is not forwarded by the Postal Service, so you need to report a new address to us.

MEDICAL CORNER

Q: What kinds of conditions did soldier eye surgeons treat at places like the Eye and Ear Infirmary in Washington, D.C.?

A: Among many other cases, a splinter perforated the cornea and wounded the lens of a soldier from Maine. The splinter and fragments of crystalline were extracted, and "protruding parts of iris excised. Form of eye well-preserved but vision lost." Others had ophthalmia, which was an inflammation of the eye, especially of its membranes or external structures. See <https://www.civilwarmed.org/surgeons-call/eye-surgeon/>



ARTILLERY PIECE HAULED UP HILL, FIRED INTO LUNETTE

continued from page 2

Division of the XIII Corps under Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand. The 23rd was in the 1st Brigade of Brig. Gen. Stephen G. Burbridge; the 77th in the 2nd Brigade under Col. William J. Landrum. The Chicago Mercantile was one of two artillery units for the division.

The book is “The Union Assaults at Vicksburg,” by Timothy B. Smith, published in 2020. It says on page 250 that amid tough fighting and slow progress, Burbridge repeatedly asked command permission to bring up an artillery gun. Finally, “some of the Wisconsin troops moved a single artillery piece from the Chicago Mercantile Battery forward There, within ‘25 or 30 feet’ of the Confederate line, the gun added a great deal of firepower for the Federals. McClernand himself noted that ‘Captain White, of the Chicago Mercantile Battery, carried forward one of his pieces by hand quite to the ditch, and double-shotting it, fired into an embrasure, disabling a gun in it ready to be discharged, and scattering death among the rebel cannoneers.’”

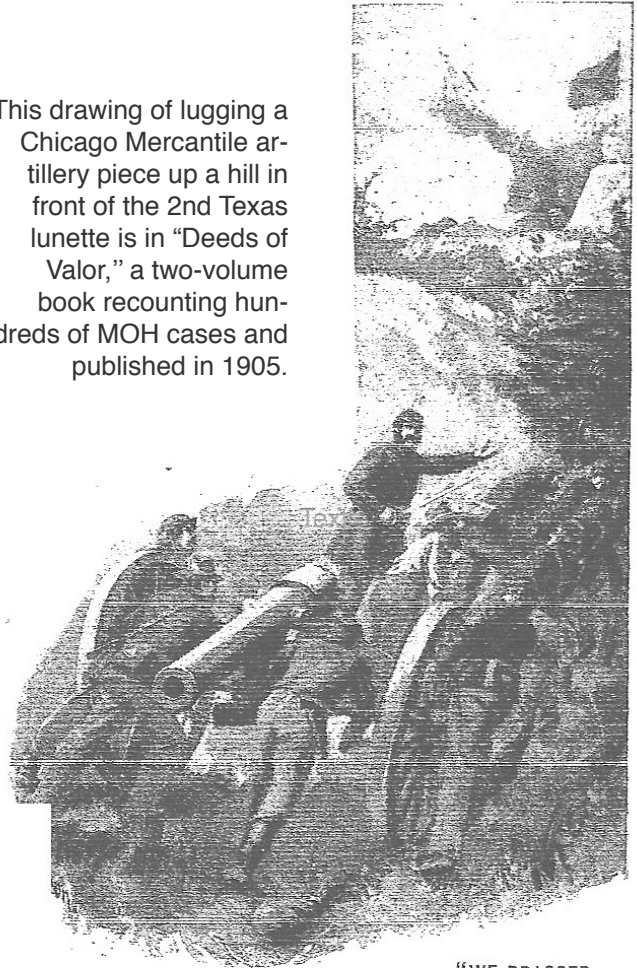
Various troops brought the artillery ammunition in their haversacks, the book says.

Putnam’s story was researched for the Camp 1 newsletter in 2018. A thorough sorting of the wording of MOH citations at https://history.army.mil/moh/civilwar_af.html for May 22 and Vicksburg had found his tie to the Chicago Mercantile’s medals, but he was not mentioned in published accounts that mentioned the action. The biggest such account was in “Deeds of Valor,” a two-volume book recounting hundreds of MOH cases and published in 1905. That account, by Chicago Mercantile Capt. Patrick White, named all six MOH men from the artillery unit, but not Putnam.

More than three decades after Vicksburg, five men from the battery, including White, had received the MOH, in 1894 and 1895. A sixth member was awarded in 1897; there is no obvious reason for the time differences. Putnam did not get his MOH until 1898, so perhaps the earlier people were cemented in lore – or possibly White’s account was from when he recommended the MOH for his men, and he focused only on them.

The MOH citation for all seven was, “Carried with others by hand a cannon up to and fired it

This drawing of lugging a Chicago Mercantile artillery piece up a hill in front of the 2nd Texas lunette is in “Deeds of Valor,” a two-volume book recounting hundreds of MOH cases and published in 1905.



“WE DRAGGED ONE GUN UP.”

through an embrasure of the enemy’s works.”

As for the 23rd Wisconsin, E.B. Quiner’s comprehensive 1866 history of Badger state units makes mention of its action on page 713 and is at <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/16617/rec/33> Quiner wrote only three pages about Vicksburg and nearby fighting, so the artillery piece obviously was a highpoint for the 23rd.

Quiner said that “during the afternoon, Companies B and E were detached from the regiment, under orders to place a piece of artillery in position near

Continued on next page

WAS ANYONE IN 23RD WISCONSIN CONSIDERED FOR MOH?

continued from previous page

the fort. This service they performed in the most gallant manner, drawing the piece by hand, through ravines and over steep hills, to a point within 20 yards of the rebel line, where they kept it supplied with ammunition during the engagement.”

Quiner listed three dead in Companies B and E. One had been killed on May 20 and the others died of wounds a few days after May 22.

In the “Deeds of Valor” book, White gives a stirring three-page recounting of the action and says: “I got a detail from the 83rd Indiana Infantry, and with ropes we dragged one gun up to within a few feet of the breast-works by hand, the infantry carrying the ammunition in their arms.”

However, the 83rd Indiana was in an entirely different Army Corps, under Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman. Perhaps White meant the 83rd Ohio, or did he mean the 23rd Wisconsin? Both were in the same brigade. The fog of war, and writing decades after the event, could have made him inaccurate on such a detail.

So the reader is left to wonder whether someone in the 23rd also was, or should have been, considered for the MOH, or whether the full story is merely that the seven MOH men were the most heroic of a group within a larger group involved with lugging the artillery piece. There were steadily fewer witnesses

alive three decades later when the others got the MOH.

The 2018 story in the Camp 1 newsletter also noted that one paragraph about the Chicago Mercantile action is in “Vicksburg,” a 2004 book by Michael B. Ballard. It is on page 343 and says Burbridge “brought in artillery support, a six-pounder cannon hauled up a slope ... From only about 10 yards away from the Confederate embrasure, the cannon shot canister into the lunette.”

A six-pounder was the lightest artillery piece, weighing 884 pounds, according to Civil War artillery sites. It was made of bronze and was five feet in length. Its projectile weighed 6.1 pounds; hence the name.

The lunette, a fortification with flanks that could provide artillery fire on any attacker, was occupied by the 2nd Texas Infantry Regiment.

Putnam arrived at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home in October 1902 (four years after receiving the medal) with what was described as general and senile disability, but the MOH was not on his record there, for reasons not evident today. Putnam died on Jan. 15, 1907, at age 69, and is buried in Section 16, Grave 109 at Wood.

Putnam was the only member of the 77th Illinois to receive the MOH in the entire war, according to a list of the nearly 100 troops from that state to receive the medal. The list is at <http://www.illinoiscivilwar.org/cwmoh.html>



Cpl. Winthrop D. Putnam of the 77th Illinois Infantry assisted troops from the Chicago Mercantile Battery and was awarded the Medal of Honor with the same citation that they had. He died at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home in 1907.

When MOHs were awarded for artillery piece action

Pvt. William G. Stephens, Dec. 21, 1894

Battery commander Capt. Patrick H. White, Jan. 15, 1895

Cpl. James Dunne, Jan. 15, 1895

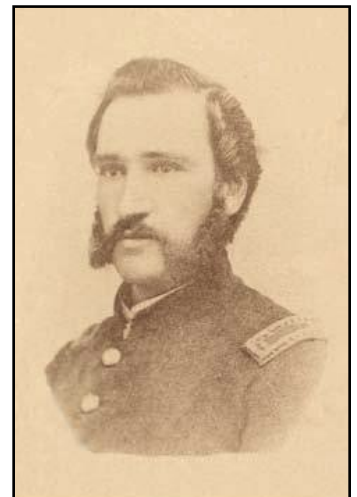
Pvt. Charles H. Kloth, Jan. 15, 1895

Pvt. Patrick McGuire, Jan. 15, 1895

Pvt. George Kretsinger, July 20, 1897

Cpl. Winthrop D. Putnam, April 4, 1898

From citations at <https://www.cmohs.org/recipients> and individual pages at Wikipedia and Find a Grave. The death date and burial site for James Dunne are not known.



Capt. Patrick H. White was commander of the Chicago Mercantile Battery. Photo from Find a Grave.