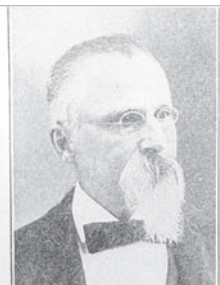




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About this publication

By **Alec Johnson**

Editor & Publisher
Watertown Daily Times

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for gallantry. Established in 1862 and sparingly awarded in recent history, it has been bestowed on numerous residents of Northern New York, with the highest local concentration right after the Civil War.

According to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society 3,528 individuals have been awarded medals, but there are only 61 living recipients. The Civil War represents 40 percent of the medals and New York State has the most medals awarded with 677.

The Watertown Daily Times has chronicled Medal of Honor recipients since 1862 and over the past 164 years published volumes of material on both the recipients who were born or raised here and those associated with Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division.

The recent recognition of Sgt. Michael H. Ollis, who died in the summer of 2013 during combat in Afghanistan while protecting a comrade in arms from Poland, led us to dig into our library to find out more Medal of Honor recipients with local connections.

In years past we have published lists, and in some cases full profiles, this 24-page book is the most inclusive repository of their stories we have ever produced. And while robust, it certainly does not include all the stories we have published nor does it include mention of every recipient noted in the Times history.

Artificial Intelligence has assisted with the name search, and in some cases attached people to Fort Drum who never received a Medal of Honor, or those who did receive it but had no association with Fort Drum or the 10th Mountain Division.

Thanks to human editing, we have concluded that the following men have received a Medal of Honor and have associations to Fort Drum. They are: **John Magrath, Jared Monti, Will Swenson, Travis Atkins** and **Michael Ollis**. A story about each hero is included within these pages.

In our research we also found colorful characters who are Medal of Honor recipients and have called Northern New York their home at some point in their lives.

Captain Red Rampage, real name **Lawson Peterson**, was a commander of two submarines during World War II. He was born in Lowville.

Newton M. Curtis was a Depeyster farmer who rose to be a Civil War hero and a statesman. Dave Shampine featured his life in 2010.

Joseph Lonsway is Clayton's hero. In 2024 a historic marker was placed in St. Mary's Cemetery. A 1975 story in the Times considered him one of NNY's most interesting men. That account is also included.

Frederick R. Jackson lived in Smithville where there is a grave marker, though it was many years after he was wounded on a Civil War battlefield, and many years after he walked and chatted with the 16th president of the United States.

Dr. Mary Edwards is the only woman to ever receive the top honor. It was taken away once, but later restored. She was born in Oswego in 1832. This newspaper directed its attention to Mary Walker for pioneering in women's rights. Previous publicity occasionally occurred such as in October of 1839 when the panel of experts on the radio program, "Information, Please," could not answer the question, "What famous woman doctor wore trousers?" In 1943 the pants angle was related to the fact that "Rosie the Riveter" was so garbed on the production line of factories which were making the guns, bullets, airplanes and tanks of World War II.

St. Lawrence County alone has had 17 recipients of the Medal of Honor, their names are included within.

The Army leads the medals by service branch with 2,467. That is followed by Navy, 749; Marine Corps, 300; Air Force, 19 and Coast Guard, 1. Thank you for reading.

Medal of Honor

Army Digest

Official U.S. Army Magazine

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT U.S. HIGHEST AWARD FOR GALLANTRY

Editor's note: This was published Dec. 3, 1966 in the Watertown Daily Times

Everyone is familiar with the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the Medal of Honor in 1862 and the reasons for awarding it but there are many little-known sidelights concerning the gallant men who won what has become to be our Nation's highest award for gallantry.

The original Army Medal of Honor was designed by a Frenchman with a German name and a German with a French name. Christian Schussel from Alsace, France, and Anthony C. Paquet from Hamburg, Germany.

An odd fact is that the first winner of the Medal was an Irishman by the name of Bernard J. D. Irwin who won the Medal for action that occurred on 14 February 1861, before the award was actually created. He did not receive it until 21 January 1894, over thirty years later.

The youngest recipient of the Medal of Honor was a Civil War drummer boy of 15. Two other drummer boys also won the coveted decoration during that same war. The oldest recipient was Major General Adolphus W. Greely who was awarded the decoration on his 81st birthday.

A father and son have won the Medal of Honor. Arthur MacArthur won the medal during the Civil War and his son, Douglas Mac-Arthur, won it during World War II.

An entire Civil War regiment, the 27th Maine Volunteer Infantry was awarded the Medal of Honor as an inducement to reenlist but a Board of Review convened in 1916 struck their names from the rolls along with a number of others who did not rate the award.

The three days of fighting during the Battle of Gettys-

Medal of Honor

burg netted Union soldiers 63 Medals of Honor.

The application nominating one Civil War recipient of the Medal read in part. "This application is in behalf of a nice lad who wants to stay in the service..."

Fifty-three Medals of Honor were awarded to bridge builders.

During the siege of Vicksburg, Miss., in 1863 some 150 men of the Second Division volunteered to build a bridge across a ditch in front of the bluff so that an assault could be launched across the bridge. They were ripped by enemy fire and pinned down: only 53 made their way back to their lines. Ali were awarded the Medal of Honor.

At least two dozen full-blooded Indians won the Medal of Honor during the Indian Wars while fighting against their own people.

Government records do not indicate the full tally but at least eight Black men won the Medal.

Although many of his people were placed in internment camps, a Japanese American won the Medal for actions in Italy during World War II. A Philippine Scout also received the Medal.

One woman. Dr. Mary Walker, a contract surgeon for the Union Army, was awarded the Medal but was asked to return it. She never did.

The only foreign nations not serving in the U. S. Arms to receive the Medal were the Unknown Soldiers of Britain. France. Italy and Rumania.

Col. Caivin P. Titus, then a musician, won the Medal for his gallantry during the Soxer Rebellion. Until his death recently: Colonel Titus was one of the oldest living recipients of the Medal.

Award of the Medal to members of other services is not unusual. The first two winners of the Army Medal of Honor in World War I were Marines.

During World War I, no Medals of Honor were pre-

sented until after the cessation of hostilities, and only four had been authorized before the end of the war.

In 1918 enlisted winners of the Medal got two dollars extra per month in their pay; today they receive one hundred dollars a month from Veterans Administration. Pending legislation would continue payments to the widows of deceased Medal of Honor winners.

In some instances during the 19th Century the Medal was mailed to men who were awarded it. Because some men had moved, the award never reached them. President Theodore Roosevelt in an executive order in 1905 ordered that henceforth the Medal would be presented "with formal and impressive ceremonial."

It's surprising but true that in 1890, with no war in progress, there were 33 Medals awarded and the following year 67. Subsequent legislation corrected this situation.

Two Medals of Honor were awarded under unique circumstances — to Charles A. Lindbergh for his famous flight across the Atlantic, and to Maj. Gen. Adolphus W. Greely for "his lifetime of splendid public service."

During World War II only 292 men out of more than ten million won the Medal. It was won by as many T/5's as generals, six in each group. Nine corporals won it, and so did nine majors. The first lieutenants, with 31, trailed the staff sergeants with 39. The privates first class and privates accounted for 79.

France and Korea predominate as the locale for actions that won the Medal of Honor.

Captain Red Rampage is legend from Lowville

LAWSON PETERSON

Editor's Note: This story was published Sept. 26, 1999 in the Watertown Daily Times.

Several north country men have received the Medal Honor for their valor shown during World War II. And none is more famous than Lawson Peterson "Captain Red" Ramage, a graduate of Beaver Fall High School. Commander Ramage commanded two submarines during World War II, the USS Trout and the USS Parche. It was an incident July

31, 1944, with the latter craft that brought him recognition.

Admiral Ramage, known as Red, was one of the Navy's most decorated heroes.

Adm. Samuel Eliot Morrison, the Harvard historian, in his history of American naval operations in World War II, called Admiral Ramage's exploits "one of the most courageous and stubbornly fought submarine actions of the war."

Another account of the Ramage heroism is in the book *The Far and*

the Deep by Cmdr. Edward P. Stafford and published in 1967.

Ironically, the Lowville man's story failed to make a National Broadcasting Co. television series on submariners, but an NBC official said his feats were "too fabulous and extensive to crowd into a mere half-hour show."

One of Admiral Ramage's post-war assignments was to direct the search for the atomic submarine *Thresher*, which sank in the Atlantic off Boston in 1962.

His citation read:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as commanding officer ... in a predawn attack on a Japanese convoy ... Boldly penetrating the screen of a heavily escorted convoy, Cmdr. Ramage launched a perilous surface attack by delivering a crippling stern shot into a freighter and quickly following up with a series of bow and stern

See RAMPAGE T23



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Medal of Honor: Newton M. Curtis, a Depeyster farmer

By Dave Shampine

Watertown Daily Times

A HOMEGROWN PATRIOT

DePeyster farmer rises to Civil War hero and statesman

Editor's Note: This story was published May 16, 2010 in the Watertown Daily Times.

As a group of young men, most of them farmers, met on an April evening 149 years ago in the Methodist Church at DePeyster, one stood out above all with his 6-foot-7 frame. And it was he, the town's 25-year-old postmaster, who was asked to speak.

Newton Curtis - who, years later would be a powerful speaker in the political arena - proclaimed, "Patriotism is of no party." Rebuffing a suggestion that political convictions may discourage men from answering President Lincoln's call to bear arms, he exhorted, "The Union must be preserved."

Fifteen men vowed to serve that night, and more added their names at a subsequent gathering. Finally, on May 2, 1861, Curtis, the elected captain, was leading a group of at least 64 volunteers from DePeyster and Macomb in a parade of farm wagons to Ogdensburg, and ultimately to the battlefields of the South.

At the conclusion of the Civil War, the tall gentleman - "with a largeness of body, though not adipose or over fleshy," according to the Canton Commercial Advertiser - would return home a wounded and decorated hero who had risen to the rank of general. In his future was the politics of St. Lawrence County, New York state and the nation. The "hero of Fort Fisher," as he was lauded, was to become "one of the political war horses" of his day, the Canton paper reported.

* n n

Newton Martin Curtis had aspired to public service from the time he was a young man. And he had experienced defeat, even at an embarrassing level in DePeyster, his hometown.

He was born May 21, 1835, the second son of Jonathan

and Mary Riser Curtis, on his parents' farm. His father, a soldier in the War of 1812, was the grandson of William Curtis, who had come from England in 1632 to settle in Boston.

Newton Curtis was educated in DePeyster schools and at Gouverneur Wesleyan Seminary. He followed his father's trade in farming, but he also studied law.

He was not quite 22 when in 1857 he was commissioned DePeyster's postmaster. Three years later, he sought political office, the first assembly district of St. Lawrence County. Running on the Democratic line, the young man didn't have a chance. His 1,424 votes were dwarfed by Republican Charles Richardson's tally of 3,536. DePeyster gave the hometown gentleman a mere 47 votes. Richardson counted 207.

Some of DePeyster's farmers were in Ogdensburg on an April day when they came upon a rally at Ford and Isabella streets. Ogdensburg Journal Editor Henry R. James was standing on a dry goods box, reading the president's call for volunteers. They brought the battle cry home, organizing a meeting the night of April 15, 1861, in the Methodist Church.

Capt. Benjamin Eastman, old-line Whig and Protectionist and active Republican worker, urged attendees to answer the president's call and was taken aback by an apparent lack of interest. He called upon Curtis to address the gathering.

"I said that patriotism was of no party, and regretted that the question of party politics should be raised when there was nothing to be considered but the preservation of the Union," he wrote 45 years later in a book, "From Bull Run to Chancellorsville."

After the session broke up, discussions continued in Mason's Tavern, where 15 men volunteered to go to battle. After a second meeting April 26 at the town hall, Curtis found himself elected captain of a full complement of noncommissioned officers, musicians and 64 privates.



The grave of General Newton M. Curtis in the Ogdensburg Cemetery. Watertown Daily Times

On May 2, the company of raw recruits gathered at the DePeyster town hall for a 7 a.m. march, destination Ogdensburg, about 11 miles away. Before leaving, they were presented \$400, collected by the women of their community.

As their parade reached Heuvelton, they were greeted by a cheering crowd waving flags and handkerchiefs, and a booming cannon. Upon arrival in Ogdensburg, the men were given the first designation of their organization: gingham caps distributed by the district United States attorney. These would do until uniforms were issued.

Then, to the music of two bands, they marched to the Northern Railroad depot, where they boarded a train. Next stop, Albany, where this group was to become Company G of the 16th New York Volunteer Infantry.

* n n

The young men of the 16th trained in Virginia, where in July they were brought together with the 18th, 31st and 32nd New York regiments to form the Second Brigade of the Fifth Division, Second United States Infantry. Off they marched to Fairfax, where on the morning

of July 17, 1861, they got their first taste of combat, a small skirmish where a sergeant with the 18th fell mortally wounded.

Ahead of them would be defeat at Bull Run, which, Curtis wrote, was a show of unskilled leadership on both sides. The soldiers from the North pulled back to reorganize for their next encounter.

They marched onward in 1862 into a number of battles. In an exchange between North and South on May 7 at West Point, Va., Curtis was wounded. The scene was described by Maj. Joel J. Seaver in his dispatch to the Malone Palladium, where he was editor.

"Captain Curtis, while urging on his men, was struck by a ball in his left breast, directly over his heart. The ball struck a rib, glanced around and came out of his back. Twice he rallied his men after the shot, and, by his presence of mind and bravery, doubtless saved many a valuable life."

In March 1863, Curtis, having been promoted to lieutenant colonel five months after he was wounded, took advantage of his leave of absence to marry Emeline Clark of Springfield, Ill. He shared no revelations in his book about

that episode of his life.

It also is unclear how long he permitted injury and wedding bells to keep him away from the battlefield.

The 16th, meanwhile, fought on. There was Gaines's Mill, Malvern Hill and Crampton's Pass, Md. There, of 270 men who went into battle, 209 came out unscathed. Eighteen were killed and 43 wounded, according to Curtis's book. Then came Antietam and Fredericksburg, followed in the spring of 1863 by Chancellorsville.

"Never was the Sixteenth put into a hotter fight, and never did it show more valor and fortitude than in the battle of Salem Heights (also called Salem Church, the final assault at Chancellorsville), where it contended against overwhelming numbers," wrote Curtis.

In defeat on May 3 and 4, the 16th suffered 20 more deaths and 87 wounded. Forty-nine were listed as missing.

That was the unit's last fray. On May 22, 1863, the 16th was mustered out of service. Its final campaign tally was 130 killed in action or mortally wounded, and 84 deaths by various other causes.

See CURTIS 5

Curtis

From T4

As he looked back years later to his war experience, Curtis was philosophical about the fear of death as he went into battle.

"The fear of death is at best but momentary, and is only felt when it appears imminent; as soon as the crisis is past it is the first thing forgotten."

He continued, "I had no fear of death in battle, for before I was mustered into service, I had a presentiment that I should not be killed in the army, but would have my eyesight injured."

And so it came to pass, on Jan. 15, 1865, as he and comrades of the former 16th served under the banner of the 121st New York Volunteer Infantry.

Fort Fisher, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, below Wilmington, N.C., was "the largest and best equipped fortification constructed by the Confederates," he said in an address in 1899 to the Massachusetts Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States in Boston.

The fort's heavy defensive barriers extended out some 12 feet and were 12 feet high or more, he said.

He described the attack as "a hand-to-hand contest with swords and bayonets."

"We gained possession of the seventh traverse at 4:45 p.m. ... and shortly after 5:15 p.m. ... when the sun was just disappearing ... while the volunteers were assembling, I went further into the fort and had ascended a magazine or sand dune for the purpose of looking into the angle of the bastion I intended to attack, when I was struck and disabled by two fragments of a shell, one destroying the left eye and the other carrying away a portion of the bone at the base of the brain."

Brig. Gen. Adelbert Ames, Second Division commander, wrote, "Bvt. Brig. Gen. N.M. Curtis, commanding First Brigade, was prominent throughout the day for his bravery, coolness and judgement. His services cannot be over-estimated. He fell a short time be-

fore dark seriously wounded in the head by a canister shot."

He was presented the Medal of Honor "for extraordinary heroism" in the battle. "The first man to pass through the stockade, Brigadier General Curtis personally led each assault on the traverses and was four times wounded," his citation read.

Fort Fisher fell that night to Union land and naval forces. Confederate Gen. William H.C. Whiting was mortally wounded in the battle, and Col. William Lamb, commander of the fort, was seriously wounded. Lamb survived, later to write "Fort Fisher commanded the last gateway between the Confederate states and the outside world. Its capture, with the resulting loss of the Cape Fear River defenses and of Wilmington, the great importing depot of the south, effectually ended all blockade-running."

In 1899, two old soldiers, Gen. Curtis and Col. Lamb, came face to face on a stage in Canton's old town hall. There to help institute a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, "Both spoke, paying one another splendid compliments," the Canton Commercial Advertiser reported, describing Lamb as "a polished southern gentleman with well trimmed moustache."

Curtis was not a brigadier general at the time of the Fort Fisher assault, but his "gallant services" there prompted Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton to elevate him to that rank.

Following the surrender at Appomattox, Curtis was appointed chief of staff of the department of Virginia and was later named commander of southwestern Virginia. He ended his military career Jan. 15, 1866.

About a month later, on Feb. 25, Emeline gave birth to the first of the couple's four daughters, Phoebe.

An appreciative government awarded him a string of political appointments over the next 18 years, beginning in 1866 as collector of customs for the district of Oswegatchie. A year later, he became a special agent with the Treasury Department. The family continued to grow, with Mary born in February 1868, Florence in 1873 and Elizabeth in 1878.

A career in the political are-

Medal of Honor

na for the one-eyed gifted orator, recognized for his commanding stature and soldierly bearing, began in 1884, when he headed into seven successive terms as state assemblyman. Among his accomplishments in Albany was the bill he sponsored that placed the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center in Ogdensburg.

He was elected to Congress in 1890 and served until 1897. His departure from the legislative branch brought another political appointment - inspector of soldiers' homes.

The retired general and statesman maintained homes at 417 Elizabeth St. in Ogdensburg and at Irving Place, New York City. While walking there the afternoon of Jan. 8, 1910, he collapsed and died. He was 75.

A statue bearing the general's image, created by Roland Hinton Perry, still stands in Ogdensburg. His daughters and 150 Civil War veterans attended the unveiling ceremony on Oct. 2, 1913, in a downpour.

Florence Curtis, a librarian and educator, lived in Richmond, Ind. She died in October 1944 at the age of 71.

The oldest of the sisters was the only one to marry. When Phoebe Vilas died at 87 in March 1953 in the Elizabeth Street family home, she left three sons: Curtis M. Vilas of Michigan City, Ind.; George C. Vilas of Miami, and Joseph W. Vilas of Madison, Wis.

Mary, who was 83 when she died in October 1951, and Elizabeth, a retired teacher who died 11 months later at age 74, lived most of their lives in the family's Ogdensburg home.

Newton Curtis's brother, Gates, who was 12 years older, gained some notoriety of his own. He wrote a history of St. Lawrence County, "Our County and Its People," published in 1894, and was an inventor, patenting several models of the Curtis Plow, which he manufactured in his foundry. He also invented a turbine water wheel and a shingle machine.

Gates Curtis died Jan. 13, 1905, in Ogdensburg.

U.S. General Former Resident of Canton

BRIG. GEN. WM. H. WILBUR WAS PROMINENT IN INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA

Editor's note: This story was published Aug. 25, 1943 in the Watertown Daily Times

Brig. Gen. William Wilbur, one of the leading American military figures in the invasion and conquest of northern Africa, once lived in this village as a small boy. This fact has been made known through the visit of Gen. Wilbur's mother, Mrs. Edith Wilbur, who is now visiting friends in Canton.

Mrs. Wilbur and her family left Canton for Springfield, Mass., in 1896 after the death of her husband, the late Dr. John Wilbur. General Wilbur, while still a colonel, was one of twelve American army officers who organized the American invasion of Tunisia. He is regarded as having been largely responsible for the successful coordination in which the invasion was carried out and later for contacting the French military commander in Casablanca to secure a halt to needless bloodshed between potential allies.

General Wilbur was personally decorated with the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest American military honor, by President Roosevelt. The award was made during the president's famous trip to North Africa in the presence of such men as Winston Churchill, Gen. George C. Marshall, Gen. George Patton, and Admiral Ernest J. King.

Although many residents of Canton recall Dr. Wilbur and his family when they lived here a half century ago, the fact that little "Billy" Wilbur had grown up to become one of the nation's leading soldiers was not known.

Dr. Wilbur came to Canton with his family in the early 1890s. A medical specialist and surgeon with apparent means, his small practice in Canton was largely limited to charitable cases. The family lived for some time on the old Delos Jones farm on the Morley Road, where Dr. Wilbur kept a stable of notable horses.

Later, Dr. Wilbur purchased the large home at the head of Judson Street, formerly owned by Henry Hosley of Boston. He built a large barn and stables for his fine horses and established the Nutwood Stock Farm. Few people recall William Wilbur, who was only eight years old when he left Canton, but the general's earliest memories must have been formed in the pleasant home on Judson Street and among the elm-arched streets of Canton.

Shortly after the death of Dr. Wilbur, his widow and children left Canton to live with relatives in Springfield, Mass. William Wilbur attended the United States Military Academy at West Point as a young man and has since become a distinguished soldier.

The old Wilbur home was later purchased and remodeled into a modern structure with pleasing, gracious lines by the late Prof. John E. Cheetham. It was subsequently acquired by the chapter of the Delta Delta Delta sorority at St. Lawrence University, and within the week its doors, closed since May, will once again be open. It is also recalled that General Wilbur is a great-grandson of one of the town's early settlers.

Shortly after the death of Dr. Wilbur, his widow and children left Canton to live with relatives in Springfield, Mass. William Wilbur attended the United States Military Academy at West Point as a young man and has since become a distinguished soldier.

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It is also recalled that General Wilbur is a great-grandson of one of the outstanding Quaker leaders, John Wilbur — not a fighting man, but a notable personage in American history.

Historical marker honors Medal of Honor recipient Joseph Lonsway in his hometown of Clayton

This story was published Aug. 13, 2024 in the Watertown Daily Times.

CLAYTON — Lonsway descendants, guests, and friends gathered at St. Mary's Cemetery on Aug. 2 to unveil the William G. Pomeroy Foundation Historic Marker for Private Joseph M. Lonsway, Clayton's only known Medal of Honor recipient.

Presenting the colors and providing military honors were members of Colon-Couch Post 821 of Clayton. Legionnaire Terry Fox sang the national anthem. Speakers at the event included a welcome by Clayton Village Mayor Nancy Hyde followed by Deacon Neil Fuller of St. Mary's Catholic Church who shared comments about the Lonsway family.

Fuller was followed by Lonsway descendant De-

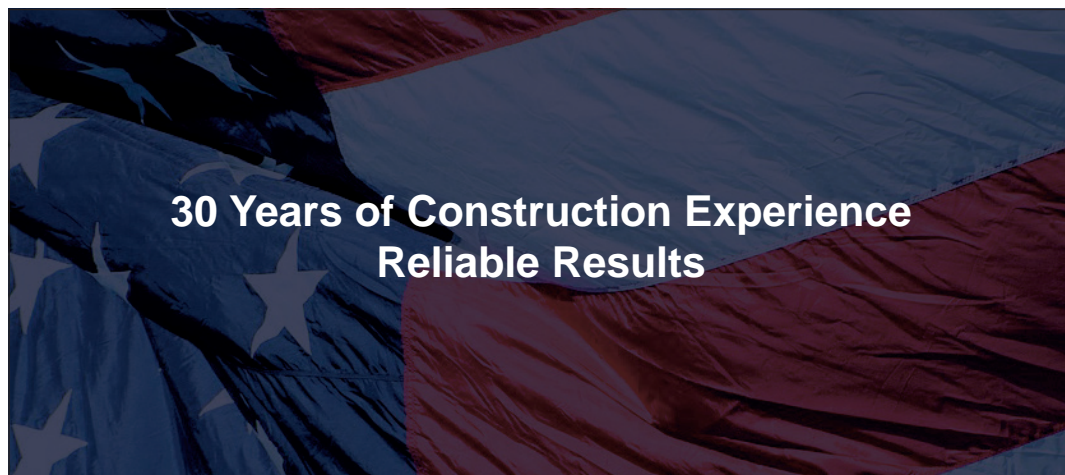
linda Fuller, who read comments from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation recognizing the significance of honoring Private Lonsway. Historian Thomas LaClair then spoke on Private Lonsway's early life, his military life and the timeline of the Medal of Honor bestowed upon him late in life.

The ceremonious unveiling of the marker was performed by Lonsway descendant Sharon Bourquin, director of the Thousand Islands Museum, as well as Mayor Hyde. Soon after the unveiling, Lonsway descendant Deacon Gerry Bouchard of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Brownville, blessed the marker.

More than 50 guests attended with over 20 Lonsway descendants in the audience, all wearing a yellow ribbon made by Janine LaClair, wife of the Clayton



During a ceremony in November of 1921, Joseph Lonsway, left, traveled to Washington, D.C., for the inauguration of the tomb of the unknown soldier. While there, Gen. John J. Pershing approached him to congratulate him and to shake his hand. More on this account on Page 13.



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historian. Sam Lundy, a reenactor from the Walter H. French Camp #17 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, attended for visual effects. After the unveiling, all descendants, guests, and friends met at the Thousand Islands Museum for a reception where stories and recent memories were shared.

Joseph Micheal Lonsway was born in Clayton on March 17, 1844. He was similar to any other boy growing up in the river community. In his youth, he experienced lumber harvesting and shipbuilding first-hand, two important industries along the riverfront. He learned to swim and he learned to work around ships and was quite good at both. As he grew into a young man in the early 1860s, the nation was also growing and experiencing challenges. The individual states were at odds over politics, industry and the ownership of slaves.

On April 12, 1861, less

than a month after Joseph turned 17 years old, the first shots of the Civil War occurred in Sumter, South Carolina. For 21/2-years, Joseph read about it and listened to what was happening. Wanting to contribute to the war effort, he enlisted on a three-year term at Sackets Harbor on October 12, 1863. He was 19 1/2 years old.

During his first year in uniform, Lonsway learned the traits of a military soldier and prepared himself physically and mentally for battle and whatever else came his way. He had been on active duty for one year and four days when he volunteered for the mission that earned him the Medal of Honor. It was at Murfree's Station, Virginia, Oct. 16, 1864.

Joseph was a Private in Company D., 20th New York Volunteers Calvary. The Southern rebels had captured a ferry boat, called a

See LONGSWAY T23

Medal of Honor: Sgt. 1st Class Monti died in combat in '06

By Marc Heller

Times Washington Correspondent

Editor's Note: This story was published on July 25, 2009 in the Watertown Daily Times.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti received the Bronze Star and about 20 other medals before he was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2006 - but the 10th Mountain Division soldier wasn't always proud of those achievements, his father said Friday.

"He regretted that he earned them by killing people," Paul Monti said in a telephone interview from his home in Raynham, Mass., a few days after President Barack Obama called to tell him his son would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

President Obama called him at home Tuesday to share the news and to say he was proud of Sgt. Monti, who was 30, for his military service. The Medal of Honor is the highest award given to service members.

Sgt. Monti is just the second U.S. service member to be

awarded the Medal of Honor for service in Afghanistan and the sixth to receive it for duty in either Afghanistan or Iraq. He was a member of the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Drum, and was killed June 21, 2006, in Gowardesh, Afghanistan, during a clash with militants involving small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

In a press release announcing the award, the White House said he "displayed immeasurable courage and uncommon valor - eventually sacrificing his own life in an effort to save his comrade."

Sgt. Monti will be the first Medal of Honor recipient under President Obama, who will present the medal to Paul Monti and Sgt. Monti's mother, Janet Monti, Sept. 17 at the White House.

Sgt. Monti enlisted in the Army in 1993. His father said that he tried to persuade his son, without success, to attend college first but that Jared said he needed the money to pay



Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti, 30, of Raynham, Mass., died in Gowardesh, Afghanistan, on June 21, 2006 when he encountered enemy forces using small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades during combat operations. He was assigned to the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y.

for college. He brushed off his father's offer to take on another job to pay for college, Mr. Monti said.

Jared was 17 years old then and needed parental permission to enlist. Mr. Monti said he figured his son would enlist anyway as soon as he turned

18, so he signed the papers.

Mr. Monti said he tried to instill "old-fashioned virtues" in his son. He had no military background himself - he wanted to serve in Vietnam but was turned away because of a back injury after being drafted - and said he was proud of his son's

mix of hard work and humility in everything from military service to playing soccer in school. Jared was the "the kind of kid who would rather pass the ball and let someone else score," he said.

Rep. John M. McHugh, R-Pierrepont Manor, who will play a role in recommending such awards should he be confirmed as Army secretary, issued a statement Friday praising Sgt. Monti.

"The Medal of Honor, our nation's highest award for valor, is a fitting tribute for a soldier who truly gave the last full measure," Mr. McHugh said. "Sgt. 1st Class Monti's actions in Afghanistan were far above the call of duty, and he represents the tremendous heroism, sacrifice, and dedication of every American soldier. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and I can only hope that this honor brings them some small degree of comfort."



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Medal of Honor:

Michael Ollis gave up his life to save comrade in Afghanistan

By Chris Brock

cbrock@wdt.net

Editor's note: This story was published Feb. 6.

The parents of a 10th Mountain Division soldier who embodied the values of courage and selflessness were notified Tuesday that their son, Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis, who died in the summer of 2013 during combat in Afghanistan while protecting a comrade in arms from Poland, will posthumously receive the nation's highest military decoration.

On Tuesday, Bob and Linda Ollis received a call at their Staten Island home from President Donald Trump informing them that Michael deserved the Medal of Honor for his actions.

"As Michael's parents, nothing can ever fill the void left in our hearts, which is also felt by our daughters, Kimberly and Kelly, as well as their spouses, Bill and Dave and their children," Bob and Linda wrote on the SSG Michael Ollis Freedom Foundation website. "Knowing that Michael's life, legacy, and final act of courage have not been forgotten leaves us with a feeling of overwhelming pride and eternal gratitude."

In August 2006, Ollis enlisted in the Army at age 17 after excelling in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at the Michael J. Petrides School on Staten Island.

He completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was assigned to the 1st Armored Division in Baumholder, Germany. In April 2008, he deployed to Iraq and was promoted to sergeant before the combat tour ended.

Ollis moved to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as a fire team leader with 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. He completed Air Assault School before deploying to Afghanistan with his unit.

Ollis returned to Fort Camp-



Michael H. Ollis during his first deployment to Afghanistan. St. Martin's Press

bell in May 2011, but he was soon reassigned to the 10th Mountain Division. He arrived at Fort Drum in November to join the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team. While stationed at Fort Drum, he lived in Sackets Harbor at Madison Barracks. He told his father he hoped to retire there after his Army career.

In 2013, Ollis was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Following two tense combat deployments in the mountains of Afghanistan, he earned the U.S. Army's Ranger tab. On Aug. 28, 2013, Ollis and his entire coalition military base, Forward Operating Base Ghazni, were caught in the middle of a major Taliban assault.

The life of Ollis and his final sacrifice caught the attention of Florida author Tom Sileo, who has authored or co-authored six military non-fiction books about heroes of America's post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2024, "I Have Your Back: How an American Soldier Became an International Hero," published by St. Martin's Press was released.

In the book, Sileo documents the confusion of the attack, which incorporated vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, suicide vests,

Taliban in coalition uniforms, indirect fire and small arms fire in bloody detail. The attack started on the base's east side with a massive blast of a vehicle containing about 3,000 pounds of explosives.

At the time of the initial blast, Staff Sgt. Ollis was with team members at the base's Morale, Welfare and Recreation building. After going quickly to a nearby bunker, as ordered, believing a mortar had landed nearby, the team returned to the building to check for wounded personnel. After returning with the team to the bunker, Ollis rushed out to help defend the installation, Sileo writes.

Arriving at a barrier closest to the base's airfield access road, he met a Polish officer he did not know, and the two paired up to move toward the airfield, where other special forces personnel already had engagements with the insurgents.

At the time of their arrival, eight of 10 insurgents had been killed, and a ninth was killed shortly after approaching the group with a grenade. Just after the ninth attacker was killed, a 10th insurgent approached from a different angle, with Ollis the closest person to him. Moving toward the insurgent, Sgt. Ollis, without body armor, stepped in front of the Polish officer, the

second closest to the insurgent, before the attacker's vest detonated, mortally wounding Ollis and hurling him several feet. He was declared dead after being taken to a nearby aid station.

Ollis's heroism has been honored by the Polish government with its highest military award, the Polish Gold Star Medal of Honor, as well as the Afghani Star. Posthumously, Ollis was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star (later upgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross in June 2019), Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and The Audie Murphy Medallion. He also received the highest honor that the nation of Poland can bestow upon an allied soldier: The War Order of Wojenny Virtuti Militari, the oldest military decoration in the world still in use.

According to the Staten Island Advance, last summer, the Richmond County American Legion penned a resolution advocating Ollis's Distinguished Service Cross be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

In January, Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella penned a letter to President Trump, conveying support for the latest push to posthumously honor Ollis with the Medal of Honor. In July, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer wrote a letter to Chief of Staff of the Army General Randy A. George, urging the Army to recommend Ollis for the distinction.

Sileo, author of "I Have Your Back," was also heavily involved in having Ollis recognized with the Medal of Honor.

"I'm just so thrilled for the Ollis family, and Michael's fellow soldiers, who served with him at Fort Drum and around the country and the world," Sileo said on Wednesday in a phone interview.

Sileo said that he sent a letter to Pete Hegseth, U.S. Secre-

tary of War, who he has known for several years. "I had no idea that Secretary Hegseth would even get my email," Sileo said. "I was shocked when later that night, the night he took office, when his senior adviser, Eric J. Geressy, an Army veteran and a hero in his own right, called me and told me they were going to take a hard look at this case."

Sileo said that he talked to Michael's parents on Wednesday. "It hasn't even been 24 hours since President Trump made the phone call to Bob and Linda, and the outpouring online and elsewhere has been unbelievable. Michael obviously deserves this in his own right without any help, but the way the Medal of Honor process is set up, it helps to have an advocate inside the government. I'm so grateful to everyone for not backing down and making sure this hero was honored the right way."

Sileo said there will be a ceremony at the White House related to the recognition, to be scheduled.

In 2019, an indoor shooting range and training facility at Fort Drum was rededicated as the Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis Weapons Training Center. The facility, previously named Range 2, was first dedicated to Ollis in June 2015.

During the week of Mountainfest in 2021, Ollis was inducted into the 10th Mountain Division Warrior Legend Hall of Fame. Robert Ollis accepted the Hall of Fame medallion and certificate on his son's behalf.

A 10th Mountain Division spokeswoman said that there have been four other division soldiers who have been recognized for their service with the Medal of Honor:

John Magrath (World War II), and post 9/11: Jared Monti, Will Swenson and Travis Atkins.

Trump presents Medal of Honor to parents of Fort Drum soldier who blocked suicide bomber

Times staff report

Editor's note: This story was published March 3 in the Watertown Daily Times.

The 10th Mountain Division's own Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis, who died while protecting a comrade in arms in Afghanistan, has been awarded the nation's highest military decoration.

During a March 2 ceremony at the White House where that comrade spoke, President Donald J. Trump awarded Staten Island native Ollis, along with two other veterans, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"In his final act on Earth, Michael absorbed the blast, sparing the life of that Polish warrior," Trump said during the ceremony, shortly before inviting Karol Cierpica to the podium. Cierpica, a Polish forces officer, was serving in Afghanistan in August 2013 when he met Ollis as they were attempting to repel Taliban insurgents.

"A soldier is not something you are from time to time. It is who you are forever. It is just like you are not a mother, a father, a sister or brother only for a moment," Cierpica said. "These are not roles given to us for a while. They are a great gift, but also a great lifelong commitment."

He expressed his gratitude to the Ollis family, his second family and second home on Staten Island. He thanked Michael for his service, adding "I will see you in our heavenly homeland."

The U.S. Army will induct the Medal of Honor recipients into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes today. The Pentagon ceremony will add Ollis to the Defense Department's permanent display of record for all recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Ollis joins the late Master Sgt. Roderick W. Edmonds, who served during World War II, and Command Sgt. Maj. Terry P. Richardson, who served during the Vietnam War, as Medal of Honor recipients to be added to the Hall of Heroes.

"As Michael's parents, nothing can ever fill the void left in our hearts, which is also felt by our daughters, Kimberly and Kelly, as well as their spouses, Bill and Dave and their children," Robert and Linda wrote on the SSG Michael Ollis Freedom Foundation website last month after being notified of their son's Medal of Honor. "Knowing that Michael's life, legacy, and final act of courage have not been forgotten leaves us with a feeling of overwhelming pride and eternal gratitude."

In August 2006, Ollis enlisted in the Army at age 17 after excelling in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at the Michael J. Petrides School on Staten Island.

He completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was assigned to the 1st Armored Division in Baumholder, Germany. In April 2008, he deployed to Iraq and was promoted to sergeant before the combat tour ended.

Ollis moved to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as a fire team leader with 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. He completed Air Assault School before deploying to Afghanistan with his unit.

Ollis returned to Fort Campbell in May 2011, but he was soon reassigned to the 10th Mountain Division. He arrived at Fort Drum in November to join the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team. While stationed at Fort Drum, he lived in Sackets Harbor at Madison Barracks. He told his father he hoped to retire there after his Army career.

In 2013, Ollis was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Following two tense combat deployments in the mountains of Afghanistan, he earned the U.S. Army's Ranger tab. On Aug. 28, 2013, Ollis and his entire coalition military base, Forward Operating Base Ghazni, were



Linda and Robert Ollis, parents of Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis, accept the posthumous Medal of Honor for their son from President Donald J. Trump during a ceremony in March at the White House. Official White House Photo by Daniel Torok

caught in the middle of a major Taliban assault.

The life of Ollis and his final sacrifice caught the attention of Florida author Tom Sileo, who has authored or co-authored six military non-fiction books about heroes of America's post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2024, "I Have Your Back: How an American Soldier Became an International Hero," published by St. Martin's Press was released.

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Frederick R. Jackson - Smithville's Civil War hero

By Dave Shampine
Watertown Daily Times

CIVIL WAR HERO MISSED CHANCE TO CHANGE HISTORY

Editor's Note: This story was published April 25, 1999 in the Watertown Daily Times.

Where was "Grampa Jack" of Smithville when President Lincoln needed him most?

After all, only 17 months earlier the one-armed soldier, by his own account, had shielded the president from would-be assassins.

But on that fateful evening of April 14, 1865, Ford's Theater in Washington was out of sight and

out of mind for the newlywed officer.

Grampa Jack, as some of his descendants in southern Jefferson County call him, was Maj. Frederick R. Jackson, veteran of the 7th Connecticut Volunteers in the Union Army and winner of the prestigious Medal of Honor.

He lived in Smithville, but not until many years after he was wounded on a Civil War battlefield, and many years after he walked and chatted with the 16th President of the United States.

So, who was this Maj. Jackson? He is prominent enough to have had a bridge named for him about eight years ago in



The new grave marker for Frederick R. Jackson, a Medal of Honor winner in the Civil War.

North Haven, Conn.

He was born there Feb. 18, 1844, a son of Benjamin Hall and Harriet Bradley Jackson. He must have been an intelligent

young man, because at the age of 17, he was all set to enter Yale.

And permit us a bit of pride here if we boast that he was a newspaper reporter. That is what Walter Gawrych, first selectman of North Haven in 1989, wrote for the Quadtown Advisor, a community newspaper.

When the conflict over states' rights came along, the young Mr. Jackson was determined to join the fight to preserve the Union. He came from fighting and patriotic stock, his obituary reveals. In 1638 his ancestors came to the New World and became members of the New Haven, Conn., settlement. In the next century, when the colonies fought to break away from British rule, among the volunteers in the freedom fight were two men who would someday be his grandfathers.

He enlisted in July 1861. A life-altering incident took place on June 16, 1862, when he was an 18-year-old first sergeant. He was at James Island in South Carolina.

The brief explanation for his Medal of Honor describes what happened: "Having his left arm shot away in a charge on the enemy, he continued on duty, taking part in a second and a third charge until he fell exhausted

from the loss of blood."

We turn to his obituary, which appeared Feb. 18, 1925, in the Watertown Daily Times, for an expanded account.

"He was struck on the elbow ... and his arm was severely shattered. With his other hand he seized the splintered arm and pressed it tightly to his side to prevent as far as possible the flow of blood. He plunged again into the battle and his regiment, after repeated charges, retired. When the troops were finally repulsed, (he) fell from loss of blood and lay on the battlefield amid intense firing for 17 hours before he finally was taken prisoner by the rebel forces and removed to a hospital."

He was taken to meet the surgeon's knife, the story continues. "He was one of 14 soldiers taken to the amputating room of the hospital, and there his arm was amputated without the use of chloroform."

The soldier was kept prisoner until Oct. 12, 1862, according to records at the National Archives in Washington. A week later, as he was being discharged from the Army, he met the president, who had been informed by other soldiers of Mr. Jackson's heroics and his injury.

In a letter written by Mr. Jackson nearly three decades later, he quoted the president.

"I want to give this brave boy a Medal of Honor, and I wish you would personally see that he has one," Mr. Lincoln said to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton.

Then dismissing the soldier, Mr. Lincoln promised him a commission.

Mr. Jackson returned to Connecticut, much to the surprise of his mother, who had received

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From T10

word from the Department of War that he had been killed in action.

The wounded warrior was 19 when he received in the fall of 1863 the commission the president had promised, along with Mr. Lincoln's invitation to Washington.

He went to the War Department, and there had an unexpected meeting with the president. "He recognized me and stopped and talked with me. In a few moments he said abruptly, "By the way, you have got your Medal of Honor all right, I suppose?"

But he had not.

"Then he asked me to go with him and took me straight to Secretary Stanton's room and said "Our little lieutenant says he hasn't received his Medal of Honor yet. Did you send it to him?"

Mr. Stanton confirmed he had not, and fulfilled the command two weeks later.

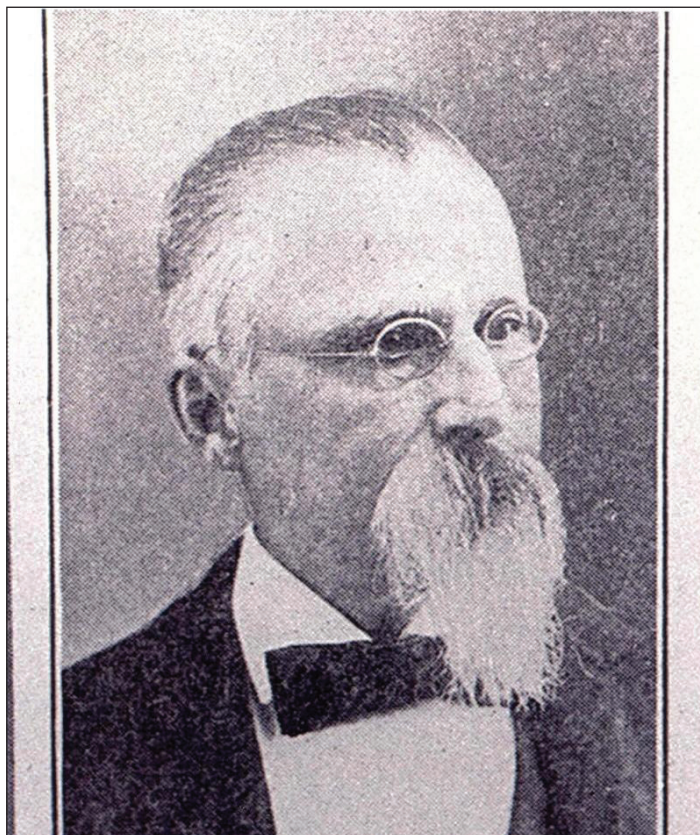
Now we approach the time where documented history and the soldier's accounts fail to concur. What is correctly recorded is that Mr. Lincoln selected the one-armed soldier to command his honor guard for his trip to Gettysburg for the Nov. 19, 1863, dedication of the national cemetery there.

But Lincoln historians both in Gettysburg and in Illinois, "The Land of Lincoln," say they are unaware of the Jackson account of what happened while the president and his guard detail were en route to the famed delivery of the Gettysburg Address.

It was Nov. 18, 1863, the day before Abraham Lincoln would pull a piece of paper from his pocket and read "Four score and seven years ago..."

We refer to a story from an unidentified newspaper, which quoted Mr. Jackson extensively.

"It was well that the great war president had a guard on that occasion, for an attempt was made in Baltimore by a gang of roughs to get into his car," Mr. Jackson said. "I had 50 men on the train as a guard. We arrived in Baltimore early in the morning, and as the cars were being slowly hauled by horses through



Frederick R. Jackson

the city, the crowd jumped upon the platform of the private car in which sat Lincoln and Stanton. It was a silent crowd that received us as the train rolled into the depot, just such a crowd as would be bent on making trouble.

"We tried to get the fellows off the platform, but they persisted and packed on like sardines. I at last ordered my men to use the bayonet and we pricked several of them before they would jump down.

"Secretary Stanton always claimed that those fellows were bent on assassinating the president and that only my guard saved him."

The Baltimore Sun checked the archives for us, found a story about the president passing through that day, but found nothing describing the skirmish on the train.

A story in The Sun listed Lt. F. R. Jackson in command of the 1st Invalid Regiment honor guard on the train. "There was quite a crowd of persons at the Camden Station upon the arrival of the train, and the President was repeatedly cheered," the story said. Mr. Lincoln "came to the platform of the car in which he was several times and acknowledged the cheering, and at the same time gave every one a chance to have a good look at him."

The story did disclose "much sport and a great amount of crowding was indulged in to obtain a sight of the distinguished passengers."

There could have been more to the "crowding" than what was reported, according to John Heiser, historian at the Gettysburg National Military Park. "If there were any attempts such as described (by Mr. Jackson), they were not written about in newspapers of the day and the reporting of any events such as this may have been suppressed by the Pinkerton agents," Mr. Heiser said.

A letter written by Maj. Jackson in 1894, reprinted in a book, "The Badge of Gallantry," by Lt. Col. Joseph B. Mitchell, addressed a different war topic, but it may apply to any question about his veracity. "I never sought fame, honor or notoriety," he said. "I don't care to tell of my own deeds. I always dreaded to. It seemed so egotistical..."

More service lay ahead for the one-armed officer. He was put in charge of Fort Kearney, one of the northern defenses for the divided nation's capital.

Here he stood his ground for five days and five hours, his two companies countering the July 1864 attack of Confederate Gen. Jubal A. Early. It could have been a bloodbath if Gen. Early

had known how superior his numbers were over the Union defenders. But he fought conservatively, then had to pull back when Union reinforcements arrived.

During that waning period of the war, the officer developed a fellowship with the president, as related in the unidentified newspaper's story.

"When in command of the war department grounds, it was my custom to escort the president nearly every night. He would come over to the war department early in the evening and I would return with him to the White House at any hour between 10 o'clock and 4 in the morning. Secretary Stanton would have me buckle on my sword belt and revolver and would send me off with the president. Lincoln wanted no guards, but the war secretary insisted that he was in personal danger if he did not have some protection."

He also talked in the story about the president's "very mischievous son" Tad, and of often finding that the boy had fallen asleep in Mr. Lincoln's office while awaiting the statesman's late-night return.

While in Washington, Lt. Jackson married Emma Lakin and took her home to North Haven. It was during that leave of absence that Mr. Lincoln was felled by a bullet to the head.

"I took the first train for Washington and upon my arrival Mr. Stanton assigned me to the charge of forming the escort of officers who were to march in the procession," he said in the newspaper story.

A 21-year-old major, he resigned May 22, 1865.

His descendants are unsure about when Mr. Jackson became a New Yorker. His wife was only 26 when she died, and that was in 1872 in Connecticut. The 1894 letter quoted in "The Badge of Gallantry" was written on stationery of the Dewey House, Thousand Islands, and was mailed in Clayton, but he wrote a return address in New Haven.

Emma Jackson bore two daughters. One lived in Washington, and the other, Maude, was married in New Haven to a Yale student, Grant Erastus Crumb of Clayton, in 1885. Mr. Crumb returned to Clayton with his bride, eventually moving to

Chaumont and finally to Smithville.

Maj. Jackson was with them in Smithville for his last years of life.

He is buried in Smithville Cemetery, in a modestly marked grave.

Grant Erastus Crumb died in 1927, and Maude died in December 1953.

When Cary R. Brick, chief of staff for Rep. John M. McHugh, R-Pierrepont Manor, went to the National Archives to assist us in this war story, he came up with another interesting note about the old soldier. Maj. Jackson had to convince Washington that he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

In a Nov. 5, 1892, letter, Mr. Jackson wrote from New Haven, "It is with the greatest surprise that I have just learned ... that my name did not appear" on a list of medal winners. It was in this letter where he described how Mr. Lincoln had directed Mr. Stanton to issue him the award.

The War Department responded within days, disclosing "no record has been found that a Medal of Honor was granted you." He was asked to send the medal to Washington as evidence of his claim while officials researched his military records.

He complied with the request. It seems astounding that Washington acted so quickly. In a letter dated Nov. 28, 1892, Mr. Jackson was informed that "your name has been properly noted on the records of this Department in accordance with the facts stated in the inscription on the Medal of Honor," and the medal was returned to him.

The whereabouts of that medal are unknown to his descendants in Jefferson County. It may be with family in California, or it may have been buried with him.

Material for this column was provided by Hilda Hayes and Joyce Crumb, widows of the major's great-grandsons Wenzell Hayes and Grant Edwin Crumb. The major's great-granddaughter Virginia Crumb, great-great-grandchildren Emily Hayes, Joyce Hayes and Wenzell Hayes Jr. also assisted. The unidentified newspaper, saved by Emily Hayes, may have been the National Tribune, official newspaper of the Grand Army of the Republic, according to Mr. Heiser in Gettysburg.

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Civil War Vet's Sword, Papers Again Put Hero in Headlines

Clayton's Lonsway regaled as NNY's most interesting man

By Charles Heffner
Staff Writer of the Times

Editor's note: This story was published Nov. 17, 1975 in the Watertown Daily Times

One of the more interesting characters in Northern New York history was a lifelong Clayton resident named Joseph Lonsway — a Civil War veteran, Congressional Medal of Honor winner and locally known raconteur.

Mr. Lonsway, who lived to the ripe old age of 89, has been dead for 50 years now, long enough to have faded into obscurity. He had been a largely forgotten footnote in the annals of the north.

But not entirely forgotten.

He received a measure of recognition just a few days ago when a story in the Buffalo Evening News told of his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Charity Geng of Buffalo, turning over his papers and cavalry sword to a chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.



Joseph Lonsway

His papers, the story related, included:

— An account of how Mr. Lonsway, while a boy, got into trouble at school for placing a snake in his teacher's desk.

— The citation he received when he was awarded the Medal of Honor on Feb. 27, 1917 for an act of heroism that occurred more than 52 years earlier, and

— Evidence that he enjoyed a brief moment in the spotlight when he went to Washington, D.C., for the dedication of the grave of the unknown soldier at Arlington Cemetery on Nov. 11, 1921.

The story, and especially its somewhat vague reference to the Washington trip, whetted the curiosity enough to prompt a look in the Times' files for some more information.

What the files yielded was this: The earliest mention of Mr. Lonsway in The Times came when

he was awarded the Medal of Honor, a ribbon and a rosette by the War Department for heroic Civil War action while a member of Company D of the 30th New York Volunteer Cavalry.

The award was described as "the most distinctive decoration that a man in the army or navy of this country may receive for gallantry in action against the enemy."

Mr. Lonsway's heroic action, the story explained, occurred at Murfrees Station, Va., on Oct. 16, 1864, when he volunteered to

swim across the Blackwater River under Confederate fire to obtain a large flatboat from the enemy-held shore that was needed by his company for crossing the river.

Several other men had attempted to swim to the flatboat, and died in the attempt, but Mr. Lonsway succeeded in bringing the boat back. The cavalry then managed to cross the river and take possession of the Confederate breastworks.

See FAME T15

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Yes to Tobacco But No for Intoxication

Watertown Daily Times

This column was published March 5, 1976 in the Watertown Daily Times

The story of Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, born in Oswego November 28, 1832, appears every so often in newspapers when the attempt is made to record that there is nothing new under the sun.

During the last few days Brenda Woods in the New York News, writes under the heading, "The Story of a Liberationist." Joe Ganley of the Syracuse Herald writes likewise of her as "one of the country's original women's libbers." Both agree about the fact that she was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor in 1865 by President Andrew Johnson and had it taken away from her in 1917 by Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. Her great-grandniece, Ann Walker, is attempting to have the medal reinstated by a special act of congress. She is writing a book, "Mary's Lost Medal of Honor."

The last time there was a Mary Walker cycle occurred on the 50th anniversary of her death, February 21, 1919. Wire services and others distributed the story. This newspaper directed its attention to Mary Walker for pioneering in women's rights. Previous publicity occasionally occurred such as in October of 1839 when the panel of experts on the radio program, "Information, Please," could not answer the question, "What famous woman doctor wore trousers?" In 1943 the pants angle was related to the fact that "Rosie the Riveter" was so garbed on the production line of factories which were making the guns, bullets, airplanes and tanks of World War II.

On February 21, 1919, her funeral was held from her home at Bunker Hill, Oswego, her death following a fall in 1917 on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, where at 26 she was attempting to have congress restore her medal.

Mr. Ganley asks a question, "Why Dr. Mary's name was stricken from the honor lists" and he expressed the hope that research may "dredge up the details." We can't add anything other than two or three speculations. In 1916 a bill was being pushed through congress to pay an extra pension for all the living holders of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Upon reaching the age of 65, they were to receive \$10 a month.

It seems that Congressional Medals of Honor were handed out rather extensively to soldiers of the Union army for their heroic exploits during the Civil war. A board of officers was named to review the qualifications of the medal wearers and they eliminated 911; this could produce a saving of possibly \$100,000 a year of the special pension expenditures. In any event, within a year after the pension program was first considered, the list of holders was drastically cut, including Dr. Mary Walker.

The thought has been expressed that being a woman, she may have been the victim of discrimination. At that particular time she had been an outspoken suffragette, the equivalent then of an ERAer today.

Interestingly enough, that spring she sent a cable to Kaiser Wilhelm, inviting him to attend a peace conference at her home at Bunker Hill. She addressed him by saying, "Your Royal Highness is the most important general that has ever lived or is living now. You wield an influence that is felt the world over,



Dr. Mary E. Walker

and because you have attained to such a wonderful eminence in military affairs, it now behooves you to stop all war matters as no combination is able to do. I invite you to select such persons in Europe as in your great wisdom you could do and with your invitation for all that Your Royal Highness or your representatives or all those people that you choose to invite to come to Bunker Hill in Oswego and have a peace conference and do away with armament... There is but one thing in my invitation that I shall ask you and that is that no Intoxicants shall be used in my home, but my lodge shall be entirely at the disposal of yourself and those whom you wish to bring and those who are in the habit of using tobacco in any form shall have this exclusively under their control for their use."

She continued the letter by saying, "I who invite you am the first woman in the world to be a surgeon in the army at a time of war, and I am the only woman in the United States who has received a war medal from the United States. I am president of the Women's U.S. Constitution Association. The President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the speaker of the House of Representatives and their wives at your suggestion will be invited by me to meet you at this conference."

She continued by suggesting they come over in May or June. The only trouble with the invitation was the fact that two weeks before, at the request of Woodrow Wilson, congress declared war against the Central Powers.

A previous cycle of Dr. Walker's news involvement occurred in 1913 and 1914. One item of interest, "Dr. Mary Walker, true to the tradition of her masculine attire, takes off her shining high hat when she enters an elevator when women are present. This example of manly courtesy was shown by Dr. Mary Walker yesterday when she rode up in the elevator of one of Washington's skyscrapers."

Another item of 1915, from Oswego: "Last night the proprietor of the Danko hotel where she is stopping, tired of playing nurse, and said that unless the doctor secured a lady attendant, she would have to move. Dr. Mary called in Coroner Vowinkel. 'Coroner,' she said, 'I'm a physician and surgeon and know my condition. I'm not ill, just weak from an attack of grippe. Feel my pulse—just as strong as 40 years ago. You go down now and see Mr. Danko and tell him I'm going to live for years and years.'"

Dr. Mary Walker was something else. The Congressional Medal was voted by congress because as a surgeon she went out on the battlefield under fire to help wounded soldiers. While acting as a surgeon she was taken prisoner by the Confederates and came back to the Union forces on an exchange for a Confederate officer.

On November 11, 1855, President Andrew Johnson awarded her the medal, the citation of which said in part, she "devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health, and also endured hardships as a prisoner of war four month in a Southern prison, while acting as a contract surgeon."

Fame

From T13

Mr. Lonsway waited quite a while before another story was written about him, but when the time came, he hit the jackpot, rising from his status as a well-known local storyteller and "noted character in the Island region" to national celebrity.

This occurred on the trip to Washington for the 1921 Armistice Day and unknown soldier ceremonies, to which he and the few other surviving Medal of Honor winners were invited by the government in honor of their war records.

Mr. Lonsway, 85 years old at the time, traveled there alone from his home in Clayton. After his arrival, he went about unnoticed at first, mingling with the crowds and enjoying the sights and ceremonies.

But then fame struck as Mr. Lonsway stood with a group of people in front of the White House.

As he explained it a few days later, upon his return to Northern New York:

"There I was, just one of the crowd, with my Congressional medal right on my breast, of course, when all of a sudden a great big fellow came up to me and grabbed me right up in his arms he "great big fellow," it turned out, was Gen. John J. Pershing, commanding officer of the Armies of the United States, who bear-hugged Mr. Lonsway out of sheer joy at seeing a man wearing the famous medal.

"Say, I was going to get mad," Mr. Lonsway said of the embrace, "until he said he was General Pershing. Well, he shook my

hand, though I told him it shook a lot of late years, and then he pulled me over to where President Harding was standing.

"Well, I am certainly mighty glad to see you," the chief executive told me. "My father was an old soldier, too. Tell me all about how you got your medal."

"So I had to tell him about that and then he asked me how I had come down, and who was paying or my trip I told him that I was paying my own way, and he told me to never mind that part of it, that he would see himself that that end was all taken care of within two weeks, so I'm expecting some word from him soon."

"Pershing took care of my expenses while I was in Washington. You know what hotel did I stay at? Say, I'm hanged if I know — I didn't pay much attention to the place, wasn't there only a little while each day anyway, there was so much going on."

Newspaper accounts tell how Mr. Lonsway, after the presidential greeting, was besieged by newsmen and photographers "until his head swam," how he was the subject of news stories across the country, and how he was "dined, honored, admired and venerated to the point that he returned home with a weight of praise and glory seldom vouchsafed to any man."

On the night he left Washington, after the festivities were over, Mr. Lonsway capped off his unusual trip with one final thrill.

While at the Washington depot looking for the train that would take him to New York, he somehow got by a contingent of guards and, confused, mistakenly boarded a special train reserved for France's Marshal Ferdinand Foch, commander of the unified French, British and American armies in World War I.

Once on the train, he was

Medal of Honor

stopped by guards, recognized by one of them, and taken into Foch's car to meet the marshal.

He seemed well pleased to see me," Mr. Lonsway said later, "though we had to talk with an

interpreter, because you know Foch doesn't speak a word of En-

See FAME T21



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Private First Class John D. Magrath

Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Army, Company L, 3d Battalion, 85th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division.

Place and date: Near Castel d'Aiano, Italy, 14 April 1945. Entered service at: Norwalk, Conn. Born: 4 July 1924, South Hadley, Mass. G.O.No.: 42, 17 July 1946.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Pfc. Magrath's company was engaged with the enemy on a ridge near Castel d'Aiano, Italy, when it was held up by intense machine gun and small arms fire and the adjoining companies were similarly engaged. Voluntarily leaving cover, Pfc. Magrath dashed forward to within a few yards of the hostile machine gun, killed the gunner and assistant gunner with his bayonet, and seized the gun. Turning it upon the enemy, he silenced 2 additional machine guns in neighboring emplacements and inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy. While running forward to engage yet another position, he was mortally wounded by enemy rifle fire. By his aggressive spirit, intrepid fighting and unhesitating courage and valor, Pfc. Magrath saved the lives of many of his comrades and contributed materially to the successful advance of his company.

Source: Official Medal of Honor citation, U.S. Army.

Pfc. John D. Magrath became the first 10th Mountain Division soldier to receive the Medal



Pfc. John D. Magrath

of Honor when he was posthumously awarded the Nation's highest military honor for his actions on 14 April 1945 while serving with Company G, 85th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, near the town of Castel d'Aiano, Italy. His citation reads,

He displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty when his company was pinned down by heavy artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire, near Castel d'Aiano, Italy. Volunteering to act as scout, armed with only a rifle, he charged headlong into withering fire, killing two Germans and wounding three in order to capture a machine gun. Carrying this weapon across an open field through heavy fire, he neutralized two more machine-gun nests; he then circled behind four other Germans, killing them with a burst as they were firing on his company. Spotting another dangerous enemy position to his right, he knelt with the machine gun in his arms and exchanged fire with the Germans until he had killed two and wounded three. The enemy now poured increased mortar and artillery fire on the

company's newly won position. Pfc. Magrath fearlessly volunteered again to brave the shelling in order to collect a report of casualties. Heroically carrying out this task, he made the supreme sacrifice—a climax to the valor and courage that are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service.

The Magrath Sports Complex has the distinction of bearing the name of the 10th Mountain Division's first soldier to receive the Nation's highest military honor. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

The medal was awarded on 18 July 1946 and presented to Magrath's family by a First Army officer (White House award ceremonies did not begin until 1980). Monuments were subsequently erected in Magrath's honor at Camp Funston on Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1955 and near Castel d'Aiano, Italy, in 2009.

In 1956, an elementary school in Norwalk, Connecticut, was named in his honor. And, in 1995, Fort Drum renamed its fitness facility the Magrath Sports Complex in his memory.

Medal marks a nation's gratitude

BATTLEFIELD BRAVERY:

10th Mountain soldier receives highest military honor

The Associated Press

Editor's note: This story was published Oct. 16, 2013 in the Watertown Daily Times

Four years after risking his life in Afghanistan, William D. Swenson received the Medal of Honor on Tuesday in a case of battlefield bravery with some odd twists: the young Army captain questioned the judgment of his superiors, and the paperwork nominating him for the award was lost. He left the military two years ago but wants to return to active duty, a rare move for a medal recipient.

The nation's highest military honor, a sky-blue ribbon and medal, was clasped around Swenson's neck by President Barack Obama at the White House. The president described how Swenson repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to recover fallen comrades and help save others during a battle against Taliban insurgents in the Ganjgal valley near the Pakistan border on Sept. 8, 2009. The fight claimed the lives of five Americans, 10 Afghan army troops and an interpreter.

Swenson is the second Medal of Honor recipient from that fight, just the second time in half a century that the medal has been awarded to two survivors of the same battle, Obama said. Two years ago, Obama presented the Medal of Honor to Marine Cpl. Dakota Meyer for heroic actions in the fight.

Capt. Swenson is the second 10th Mountain Division soldier to receive the Medal of Honor since 2001 and the third in division history. The other division soldiers who have received the honor are Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti, who was honored posthumously in September 2009, and Pfc. John D. Magrath in 1945 for his actions during

World War II.

Division representatives at Tuesday's ceremony were division Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Merritt and Col. Mark F. O'Donnell, former commander of 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment.

Obama noted that, although America's highest military honor has been bestowed nearly 3,500 times, never before had the public been able to see any of the bravery it was designed to recognize. Videos taken by the medevac crew's helmet cameras show Swenson delivering a wounded soldier to the helicopter and kissing him on the head before returning to the heat of battle.

"A simple act of compassion and loyalty to a brother in arms," Obama said at the East Room ceremony.

Swenson invited some of the soldiers and Marines who fought alongside him, as well as survivors of the five Americans killed in that fight, to the ceremony.

"Former Army Captain William Swenson exemplifies the best and the bravest that our country has to offer. Given his unparalleled contribution to protecting our nation's freedom, it is no surprise that he is affiliated with the 10th Mountain Division," said U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., in a statement. "Captain Swenson's heroism, compassion and willingness to risk his own life to protect his comrades is extraordinary and makes him a most deserving recipient of this Medal of Honor."

Swenson, 34, of Seattle, has been unemployed since leaving the military in February 2011. His request to return to active duty is being reviewed, Army spokesman George Wright said.

Times staff writer Gordon Block contributed to this report.

Medal of Honor:

Atkins killed shielding fellow soldiers from suicide bomber

By Craig Fox

Watertown Daily Times

Editor's note: This story was published March 28, 2019 in the Watertown Daily Times.

Nothing could make him more proud than hearing from his father's fellow Fort Drum soldiers, Trevor Oliver remarked on the day his dad, Staff Sgt. Travis W. Atkins, received the Medal of Honor posthumously.

Mr. Oliver, 22, who was just 11 years old when his father died saving three fellow soldiers, was joined by 50 Fort Drum soldiers who attended the esteemed ceremony in the White House on March 27.

President Donald J. Trump presented the Medal of Honor - displayed in a brown frame - to Mr. Oliver to thunderous applause.

"Your words will change my life every, every day," Mr. Oliver told the members of Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division.

Staff Sgt. Atkins was awarded the military's highest personal honor posthumously for conspicuous gallantry for his actions on June 1, 2007, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to the White House.

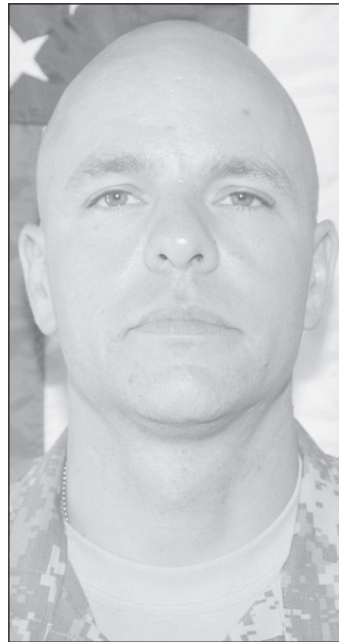
President Trump spoke about Staff Sgt. Atkins' bravery during the ceremony attended by other family members and some of his Fort Drum war buddies.

"You can't get better than the Congressional Medal of Honor, no you can't," the president told Mr. Oliver.

Staff Sgt. Atkins is the third Fort Drum soldier ever to receive the military's highest personal honor and just the fifth overall from the eight-year Iraqi War. David Bellavia of became the sixth in June.

While serving in Abu Sarnak, Iraq, with the Delta Company of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Staff Sgt. Atkins, 31, engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a suspected insurgent.

As he attempted to subdue



Travis W. Atkins.

the man, Staff Sgt. Atkins realized the man was attempting to detonate a bomb strapped to his body, President Trump said.

When Staff Sgt. Atkins noticed the insurgent was about to trigger the suicide vest, he tackled him, selflessly using his body to shield fellow soldiers from the imminent explosion.

"In his final moments, Travis did not run," President Trump said. "He didn't know how to run."

Staff Sgt. Atkins threw the insurgent away from his soldiers and fell on top of him, knowing that he was giving up his life for his men and his country.

"In doing so, he embodied the deepest meaning of the motto of the 10th Mountain Division," the president said. "He Climbed to Glory."

The three men he saved - former Sgt. Sand Aijo, former Private 1st Class Michael Kiskle and former Specialist Robert Shaw - listened while the president described what happened that day in the area of Iraq known as the "Triangle of Death."

They knew danger was ahead.

"Nothing good was going to happen. They knew that," President Trump said.

Family members and friends were joined at the White House



Brig. Gen. Michael T. Harrison, on Nov. 7, 2008, presents the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest military award, to the family of Staff Sgt. Travis W. Atkins during a ceremony on Fort Drum. From left are his mother, Elaine, 12-year-old son, Trevor, and father, Jack, all of Montana. Atkins was killed June 1, 2007, in southwest Baghdad. Watertown Daily Times

by former Fort Drum Commander and current Army Chief of Staff Mark A. Milley, other top military leaders and Vice President Mike Pence.

The president told the audience that the Army and Fort Drum were Staff Sgt. Atkins' home.

"He loved the Army," President Trump said.

Talking specifically to the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division, the president spoke about the special bond Staff Sgt. Atkins had with them.

"He loved you all," he said.

Born Dec. 9, 1975, Staff Sgt. Atkins, a Bozeman, Mont. native, enlisted in the Army in November 2000. He deployed to Iraq in 2003 and was later honorably discharged as a sergeant.

After attending the University of Montana, he re-enlisted in 2005 and deployed to Iraq in August 2006. He was promoted to staff sergeant on May 1, 2007.

"He got bored," he said. "He must have been bored for action."

In 2008, he was posthumously awarded a Distinguished Service Cross, the military's sec-

ond-highest honor below the Medal of Honor. Fort Drum's Atkins Functional Fitness Facility, which opened in November 2012, is named in his honor.

At the end of the ceremony, the president invited the staff sergeant's parents, Elaine and Jack, up to the podium. He whispered something to the mother and looked over at the young man, a stockboy in a Target in Coon Rapids, Minn.

When the president was leaving the ceremony, he shook Mr. Oliver's hand.

Leading up to the White House ceremony, Mr. Oliver had an array of emotions. He was "excited, anxious and a little nervous," Mr. Oliver told the Watertown Daily Times.

But most of all, "I'm just so proud," he said.

Mr. Oliver was just a boy when his father was killed. By then, his father taught him a lot about life and had a big impact on the man that he has become.

"He embodied what a father and soldier is all about," he said.

His father was his mentor, even though Mr. Oliver was growing up in Minnesota when

his father was assigned to Fort Drum.

"He taught me about mental strength," Mr. Oliver said, adding that life's lesson revolved around "strength and courage."

Describing his dad as "a funny, outgoing man with a big personality," Mr. Oliver remembered how his father told him to always feel thankful for waking up and being alive every day.

They spent most of their time together in Montana, where his father loved to hunt, fish and snowmobile.

That's where Mr. Oliver and Staff Sgt. Atkins bonded, passing on his passion for the outdoors that he learned from his father and Mr. Oliver's grandfather, Jack, a paratrooper in Vietnam.

"We went fishing and snowmobiling," Mr. Oliver recalled.

He remembers those days with his father well.

And now he has another memory of him - the day that the nation honored him for sacrificing his life to save three of his men.



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St. Lawrence County can boast 17 of America's war heroes

Editor's Note: This story was published Nov. 22, 2009 in the Advance-News. The original article listed only 16 men, but records of the St. Lawrence County Center for History & Culture includes Asel Haggerty who was omitted and has been added to this report.

While a recent plaque unveiled on Long Island listed 14 winners of the Medal of Honor, St. Lawrence County can boast 17 of America's War Heroes.

Gen. Newton Martin Curtis, born in DePeyster and later of Ogdensburg, won the Medal of Honor for leading the second attack on Fort Fisher, N.C., which guarded Wilmington, the last major Confederate seaport. He lost an eye and was wounded several times leading the charge.

Brevet Lt. Col. William Walling, who grew up in Gouverneur and died in Potsdam, as captain of Company C, 142nd New York Infantry, captured the flag of Fort Fisher on Dec. 25, 1864, during the naval bombardment. His exploit helped convince high command the fort could be taken.

Brevet Maj. John T. Rutherford, of Canton, as 1st Lt. of Company L, 9th New York Cavalry, led a charge

that captured 90 prisoners at Yellow Tavern, Va., on May 11, 1864. On May 27, 1864, he led a gallant dash against a superior force and captured an opponent in personal combat.

Capt. Charles H. Houghton, born in Macomb and mustered in at Ogdensburg, as captain of Company L, 14th New York Artillery, won the Medal of Honor at Petersburg, Va., on July 30, 1864. In the Union assault at the Crater and the Confederate assault repelled at Fort Haskell, he displayed "most conspicuous gallantry," was wounded three times and lost a leg.

Thomas Wells of DeKalb, chief bugler of the 6th New York Cavalry, captured a Georgia infantry regiment flag at Cedar Creek, Va., on Oct. 19, 1864.

Corporal Philot (Follett) Johnson, born in Brasher and mustered in at Ogdensburg, earned the Medal of Honor on May 27, 1864, at New Hope Church, Ga., by drawing fire from a concealed Confederate sharpshooter, enabling comrades to locate and kill the threat.

See ST. LAWRENCE T23

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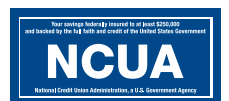
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Former North Man, Honor Medal Winner, Recalls Grim 2-Man Attack on Germans

By G. Robert Farmer

Staff Writer of the Times

Editor's Note: This story was published in the Watertown Daily Times on Oct. 31, 1968.

When 74-year-old Michael Valente of Long Island goes riding on his bicycle along an Atlantic ocean boardwalk near his home these days perhaps he remembers back 50 years when his surroundings were not so pleasant, when his friends were being killed on both sides of him and when he, a young doughboy, and another Ogdensburg resident threw caution to the winds and silenced some German machine gun nests in one of the hottest battles of World War I.

Today, Mike Valente, retired and enjoying his "nice, little home" and garden in Long Beach, L. I., still displays the stern stuff which earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor, French Croix de Guerre and Britain's Victoria Cross as he gives very definite opinions concerning the general uselessness of hippies and "that element of filthy, long-haired young people" who seem to him to be shamefully wasting their opportunities.

On Sept. 29, 1918, Mr. Valente, then living in Ogdensburg and a member of Company D of the 107th Infantry, 27th division, along with the late Joseph Mastine, also of Ogdensburg, and other northern New Yorkers, were pinned down by German machine guns at the Hindenburg line.

"Boys were getting killed," Mr. Valente said today from his home in a telephone interview. "The battle was getting pretty rough."

"I asked Joe (Mastine) to come along with me and he did. We were lucky we got away with it," he told The Times. The two knocked out machine gun nests — killing five Germans and capturing 33 others.

The modest Mr. Valente cautioned that it should not be written that "we took care of the whole Hindenburg Line. There



Michael Valente

were thousands of other boys there, Company C, with a lot of Watertown boys not too far away," he added.

What does Mr. Valente recall of the action 50 years ago?

The World War I hero, who said he has not been in Watertown since 1916 and in Ogdensburg in 35 years, received the Medal of Honor from President Herbert Hoover in 1929 on the White House lawn for the following action, as best he can remember:

A CRITICAL DAY

The fourth day of an Allied offensive was Sept. 29, 1918, and it was to be critical on the Somme front. A heavy burden of the fighting was to be borne by the First Battalion, 107th Infantry. The task of Company D, as an artillery barrage thundered overhead before dawn, was to advance against an open cut of canal. However, in the way was a formidable position known as "the Knoll." Mr. Valente's company was responsible for the left flank as the advance started and the Germans crashed in.

Company D swooped into a series of trenches, Mr. Valente recalled, and the unit began to slug its way toward "The Knoll." While the brunt

Mr. Valente then glanced around and spotted Joe Mastine.

Mastine, who died Aug. 8, 1963, at A. Barton Hepburn Hospital in Ogdensburg, was another of the North Country's most noted war heroes and joined the daring raid. Mastine later received the Distinguished Service



President Hoover presents Congressional Medal of Honor to World War hero, Michael Valente, at the White House today. Valente received the medal for bravery while in Hindenburg Line during the World War. He enlisted at Ogdensburg, N.Y.

Cross, presented Oct. 9, 1929, at Sackets Harbor Barracks.

Valente said, "What do you say, Joe, will you come with me if I go after 'em?"

Mastine, a small, quiet man, jogged after Valente. The two scurried through hellish machine-gun fire and attacked the German front. Two enemy gun nests were silenced, and five prisoners were taken.

They were not done. They slashed forward, according to an account in the 1961 National Guardsman. One machine-gun crew fled and the two men pursued them into an enemy-held trench. They killed two more enemy soldiers and rounded up 16 prisoners.

"The Knoll" was taken, but at a cost of nearly one-third of the 107th in dead and wounded. Both Valente and Mastine were wounded in the course of the day, according to regimental history, but made light of their injuries.

Despite their injuries, both men were not struck down in the action.

Valente recovered in an English hospital. In December 1918, about a month after the armistice, he returned to the U.S. and was discharged in March

1919.

"One day a woman said to me, 'You know who was looking after you in that battle?'"

"I replied, 'No,'" Mr. Valente said. "'It was St. Michael,' she said."

"I'm glad he did," Mr. Valente observed.

"I have recovered from a little surgery. They patched me up, and I feel fine," he said.

GETTING THE MEDAL

He also apparently felt fine the day President Hoover gave him the medal. "Mr. Hoover said his wife and children were there at the White House. Two hundred of us went down from Long Beach on a special train. That was some day," Mr. Valente recalled.

Mr. Valente is less charitable about some people today, particularly the younger generation, although he added, "You can't put all flowers in one bunch."

"I don't think much of the world today," the hero said. "It's a little bit mixed. Like the war in Vietnam — we are not fighting to win there; we're just trying to hold the line. The enemy is making fools out of us."

"Now take the astronauts.

They are really real men. I wouldn't classify them with the young men you see around the streets. They are real nice boys, not like those who burn draft cards and all that."

What has Mr. Valente done since his big war? From 1920 to 1930 he was in the building line and real estate until falling victim to the depression. He became water plant engineer operator for New York city. In 1940 he went to the Long Beach, L.I., city court where he was city marshal and court attendant. He retired in 1965.

He worked at the Long Beach, L.I., city court, where he was city marshal and court attendant. He retired in 1965.

In 1925 he married Margherita Marchello; they had two daughters and a son. Mrs. Valente died in 1955.

The Watertown Times reported in 1929 that the War Department "officially noticed the deed of valor." It took the government a while to reward the heroes, but many will never forget those grim days 50 years ago on the von Hindenburg Line near Ronssoy, France, when the world looked pretty bleak for a bunch of Northern New York doughboys.

Civil War center opens at museum Fort Tribute: History project in Madrid honors St. Lawrence County residents who served

Bob Beckstead

Editor's note: This story was published Nov. 11, 2020.

The St. Lawrence Power and Equipment Museum welcomed a new piece of history on Saturday to honor nearly 6,000 St. Lawrence County residents who left home to serve during the Civil War.

An official opening ceremony was held for Fort Tribute, a new Civil War-era historical interpretive center that was recently constructed on the grounds.

A monument on the fort pays tribute to Medal of Honor recipients from St. Lawrence County from 1861 to 1865 - James Allen, Newton Martin Curtis, Francis B. Hall, Follette Johnson, John T. Rutherford, Dayton P. Clarke, John C. Gilmore, Charles H. Houghton, John H. Moffitt, William Walling and Thomas M. Wells. It's the only single permanent recognition monument to the Civil War Medal of Honor recipients from St. Lawrence County.

St. Lawrence County men had served in the regiments of the New York 16th, 18th, 50th, 60th, 75th, 78th, 86th, 92nd, 93rd, 98th, 100th, 102nd, 105th, 106th, 142nd, 164th and 193rd Volunteer Infantry, as well as 2nd, 6th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, 18th, 20th and 26th Volunteer Cavalry and 1st, 13th, 14th and 16th Volunteer Artillery.

"Although no battles were fought in New York, our state provided more troops to the Union Army than any other state," said Scott A. Wilson, volunteer fort project coordinator.

New York provided 400,000 to 460,000 men during the war, nearly 21 percent of all the men in the state. They fought in artillery, infantry, cavalry, engi-

neer and other regiments.

"Nearly 6,000 men enlisted in regiments here in St. Lawrence County. The men of St. Lawrence County answered that call. Many were farm boys who had never left the county or even rode on a train. Yet, they answered the call to arms in defense of the Union. This is the least we can do to show our devotion to those who sacrificed so much. It is a great privilege to be associated with a project that honors those who came before us and who ultimately ensured our country remained unified," Mr. Wilson said.

"In our district in the north country we have a history of service going back to our nation's founding. No state committed more soldiers to serve the Union than New York. That's something we can be very proud of," said Rep. Elise M. Stefanik, R-Schuylerville.

That service continues today with military members serving at Fort Drum and around the world, she said.

She recalled the story of some local Medal of Honor winners, some of the "heroes throughout the congressional district." The Medal of Honor was established by President Abraham Lincoln.

One Medal of Honor recipient was Newton Martin Curtis, who was born on May 21, 1835 in De Peyster and served as a Union officer during the Civil War and was later a member of the United States House of Representatives. Ms. Stefanik said that, before his service, he was a local teacher, lawyer and postmaster. He volunteered to serve in 1861 and was wounded four times during the war.

Ronald Sheppard, president of the St. Lawrence Power and Equipment Mu-

seum Board of Trustees, said Fort Tribute was not just a tribute to veterans of the Civil War era, but to all veterans in St. Lawrence County.

"I think today is a really great day for our museum and also for the local area and St. Lawrence County in general," he said.

Roger Austin, secretary of the St. Lawrence Power and Equipment Museum Board of Trustees, recalled the history of the museum, which is located on 115 acres on state Route 345 in Madrid. Needing a permanent home for its exhibits, he said they selected their current location from among 19 possibilities in 2006. He said they paid \$100,000 for the \$215,000 property with the stipulations that they raise the money through donations, not borrow any money, and have enough enthusiasm to raise the money in one year.

The first structure went up in 2008, and Mr. Austin said almost two dozen structures had gone up since then. Coming soon are a new wood shop, historic church and historical print shop.

Now Fort Tribute is a part of the landscape.

"Fort Tribute is an extraordinary, beautiful monument... recognizing the American Civil War, a war that was fought to preserve the Union and end slavery," Mr. Austin said. "Fort Tribute will become the center, the home for the study of the American Civil War, its history and evolution. War shapes the lives of everyone. The Civil War took everyone's life in one manner or another."

Manfred "JR" Niles



Manfred "JR" Niles was born in Lawrence N.Y. Niles began his service at age 17, and was stationed in Japan for his first year of service. He received the Occupational Medal before going to Korea, where he was awarded the Korean Service Medal w/1 Bronze Service Star as well as a Purple Heart. He

received a Combat Infantry Badge and a United Nations Service Medal before finishing his service at age 21 with a rank of PVT-1. After the military he settled in to life as a machinist. He recently moved from Mattydale, N.Y. to Adams to be close to his daughter Debbie.

River

From T13

covery.

RPTSS serves a wide range of high-risk professions, including veterans, law enforcement, EMS personnel, firefighters, corrections officers, 911 dispatchers, customs and border protection agents, Coast Guard members, healthcare workers, and others who routinely face high-stress and traumatic situations in the line of duty.

Fame

From T15

glish. He complimented me upon my medal, and said that I was much honored to be wearing it.

"After our little chat, some guards took me in hand, at Foch's command, and showed me the way over to where my train was and put me on it."

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress can vary, but often include difficulty sleeping, trouble concentrating, irritability, hypervigilance, emotional detachment, and intrusive thoughts related to traumatic events. Many individuals may also experience persistent negative beliefs about themselves or the world around them. Left unaddressed, these symptoms can lead to broader challenges such as anxiety, substance misuse, strained relationships, decreased job performance, and difficulty making decisions.

After his return home, Mr. Lonsway regaled friends and the press with anecdotes and descriptions of his trip, and was the subject of several local news accounts.

He soon faded from the limelight, though, and, with minor exceptions, remained out of the news until the highlights of his life were retold on Jan. 22, 1925 — in his obituary.

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Longsway

From T6

flat, belonging to the Union forces, and the officer commanding Private Lonsway's company called for volunteers to swim the Blackwater River and retrieve the flat. With his company sending over a protective barrage of shots, and under a returning fire from the enemy's forces, he swam across the 600-foot stream on his back, with only his face showing above the water, and succeeded in bringing back the ferry boat. Using the seized ferry, a detachment of Union troops floated across the river, and after a spirited night engagement, captured the rebel fortification, called a breastwork. His courageous actions that day would be remembered and celebrated for years to come - including the recent historic marker celebration, 160 years later.

Throughout the war Joseph retained the grade of private though he was often

offered the chance of promotion. He was discharged and mustered out of the Army at Sackets Harbor on July 31, 1865, less than a year after his actions at Murfree's Station. He ended up serving just under two years of a three-year enlistment as he was released from service at the war's end.

Joseph's commander submitted the Medal of Honor package soon after the 1864 raid but the medal was not approved for reasons unknown, and the paperwork was filed away. Then in 1916, Congress passed the Medal of Honor Review Act initiating the review of all previously disapproved or unapproved submissions. A committee of five generals examined over 2,500 Medal of Honor packages and subsequently approved Private Lonsway's award. Joseph, now home from the war for 50 years, received notification he was being awarded the Medal of Honor. That was in a letter dated March 22, 1917, a few days after his 73rd birthday. Many in Clay-

ton knew Joseph as a veteran of the Civil War, and filled an active role in Clayton's Albert Dennis Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R) Post 410 membership. But many were not aware of his notable Medal of Honor-level actions during the war.

The Congressional Medal of Honor certificate for Private Joseph Lonsway reads: "To whom it may concern: This is to certify that Joseph Longsway was enrolled on the Twelfth day of October, 1863, to serve three years, and was discharged on the Thirty-first day of July, 1865, by reason of mustered out of the company while holding the grade of Private, in Company D., Twentieth Regiment of New York Volunteer Cavalry, that a medal of honor was awarded him on the Twenty-seventh day of February, 1917, for distinguished gallantry in action at Murfree's Station, Virginia, October, 16th, 1864, taking cover of rapid fire from Artillery from the carbines of the calvary, he volunteered to swim across

the Blackwater River to get a large flat used as a ferry boat on the other side making it possible for the detachment to cross the river and take undisputed possession of the enemy's breastworks, that his name was entered and recorded on the Army and Navy Medal of Honor Roll on the Twenty-sixth day of July, 1917, as authorized under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved April 27, 1916, and that he is entitled to receive the special pension granted by that Act." The certificate is dated Jan. 20, 1919.

On Nov. 11, 1921, Joseph, now a Medal of Honor recipient, traveled by train to Washington, D.C., to attend the inauguration of the tomb of the unknown soldier at Arlington National Cemetery (first Veterans Day). He was proudly wearing his Medal of Honor when General John J. Pershing, also attending the ceremony, came up and personally congratulated him for his achievements. The accompanied handshake was

captured in a photo printed in major newspapers propelling Private Lonsway to receive overnight notoriety across the nation. Until this time, he lived a relatively quiet life in and around Clayton. His last few years of life were a bit less quiet.

Joseph died on January 22, 1925, and was given a hero's funeral. He was 80 years old. Through the years he has been locally recognized numerous times through various ceremonies. There is a special military plaque at the Lighthouse Veteran's Memorial, downtown Clayton, with his name and military dates listed. There is a street in Clayton called Lonsway Drive and there is the Lonsway Community Center at the Parkstead Housing Complex. Furthermore, a Veteran Administration military plaque lays before his headstone in the St. Mary's Cemetery, where an American flag and a Medal of Honor flag continuously preside.

Rampage

From T3

torpedoes to sink the leading tanker and damage the second one.

"Exposed by the light of bursting flares and bravely defiant of terrific shell fire passing close overhead, he struck again, sinking a transport by two forward reloads. In the mounting fury of fire from the damaged and sinking tanker, he calmly ordered his men below, remaining on the bridge to fight it out with an enemy now disorganized and confused.

"Swift to act as a fast transport closed in to ram, Cmdr. Ramage daringly swung the stern of the speeding Parche as she crossed the bow of the onrushing ship, clearing by less than 50 feet but placing

his submarine in a deadly crossfire from escorts on all sides and with the transport dead ahead.

"Undaunted, he sent three smashing "down the throat" bow shots to stop the target, then scored a killing hit as a climax to 46 minutes of violent action with the Parche and her valiant fighting company retiring victorious and unscathed."

In accepting the award, he told President Roosevelt, "This is a tribute to all the men in the submarines out there. Many of them out there are doing the same thing." Born in 1909 in Massachusetts, he was a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Lawson P. Ramage of Lowville. He retired as a vice admiral and died in 1990.

A guided missile destroyer is christened in his name.

St. Lawrence

From T19

Private Alaric Chapin, born in Ogdensburg, was a private in Company G, 142nd New York Volunteer Infantry. At 17, he advanced at the head of his regiment during the assault on Fort Fisher on Jan. 15, 1865, and cut down enemy palisading under heavy fire, helping the column breach the fortifications.

Orderly Sgt. David Sprowle (also listed as David Sprowles) of Lisbon, U.S. Marines, on the USS Richmond in the naval battle of Fort Morgan in Mobile Bay, inspired the marine guard and directed heavy guns despite damage and casualties aboard ship.

Private James Flannigan (also spelled Flannagan) of Louisville was part of a 16-man detachment that on Feb. 15, 1863, defended a wagon train against 125 Confederate cavalrymen, repelling the attack and saving the train.

Private James Allen of Potsdam, serving with the 16th New York, captured 14 Confederate soldiers and the colors of the 16th Georgia at South Mountain, Md., on Sept. 14, 1862.

Quartermaster Daniel Dickinson Stevens, who lived in Ogdensburg while growing up, served on the USS Canonicus during attacks on Fort Fisher on Jan. 13, 1865. Despite heavy fire and his ship sustaining 36 hits, he repeatedly replaced the flag after it was shot away.

Landsman Henry S. Webster of Stockholm, aboard the USS Susquehanna during the second assault on Fort Fisher on Jan. 15, 1865, voluntarily remained with a wounded officer under heavy fire until aid arrived.

Maj. John C. Gilmore of Potsdam, 16th New York Infantry, seized his regiment's colors and rallied his men under severe fire at Salem Heights, near Fredericksburg, Va., on May 3, 1863.

Capt. Dayton P. Clarke of DeKalb, born in Hermon, distinguished himself in desperate hand-to-hand fighting as captain of Co. F, 2nd Vermont, at Spotsyl-

vania, Va.

Cpl. Charles W. Dolloff of Parishville, 1st Vermont Infantry, Company K, captured a flag at Petersburg, Va., on April 2, 1865.

Pvt. Asel Hagerty of Hammond carried regimental mail and was staff messenger for Gen. Wolcott. At Sailor's Creek, Va. 61st NY Inf. Co. A. He won The Medal of Honor along with Lt. Riddell by capturing the colors of the 10th Alabama and 4th NC Infantry in April, 1865. He mustered out Jul. 4, 1865 near Alexandria, Va. He Died in 1919.

Sgt. Michael Valente of World War I joined the National Guard in Ogdensburg. As a private in Company D, 107th Regiment, 27th Infantry Division, on Sept. 29, 1918, east of Ronssoy, France, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry during operations against the Hindenburg Line. His citation noted he rushed forward under intense machine-gun fire, killed two and captured five enemy soldiers, silenced another gun, jumped into an enemy trench, killed two and captured 16, and was later wounded and sent to the rear.

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