



The Sharpshooter



SGT. ROBERT FINCH
1st MICH SS

The Official Newsletter of
Robert Finch Camp No. 14 – Traverse City
Est. 1914 – The Oldest Active Camp in the Department of Michigan
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

A Camp 14 Brother Remembers His Two Meetings with Bruce Catton

Around the year 1970, a young U.S. Army Veteran had the opportunity to meet and talk with famed Pulitzer Prize winning author, Bruce Catton. That young Vietnam Veteran was Camp 14's own Military & Veteran Affairs Officer, Calvin Murphy.

After Brother Murphy came home from Vietnam in October of 1967, he eventually made his way from where he was raised in the Grand Rapids area to an area deeply rich in his family's history – Benzonia and Joyfield Township. MVAO Murphy's Great-Great Grandparents William and Mildred Davis and their children arrived in the area in 1863, and were among the area's first black landowners. William sold Joyfield Township a five acre plot from his land where his daughter was interred close to the family home.

A little time had passed since moving up to northern Michigan, Brother Calvin had the opportunity to read Mr. Catton's work and loved it. As MVAO Murphy stated, he has loved Catton's books and collects and read them over time, including his love of 1972's *Waiting for the Morning Train* – Catton's memoir of his childhood in Benzonia. Because of this love of Catton's writing, and his mutual connection and love of Benzonia, Brother Calvin decided to seek a visit with Mr. Catton.

One day all of those years ago, MVAO Murphy walked in to Mills Community House to see if he could meet the legendary author and tell him how much he enjoyed his work. The young Army Veteran approached Mr. Catton's office, and was welcomed in by the author himself and offered to sit down.

Brother Calvin told him of how much he appreciated his writing, and discussed their mutual roots in Benzonia. Mr. Catton told him that he knew of MVAO Murphy's family and their history in Benzonia and Joyfield Township. They had a wonderful discussion, that definitely left a mark with Brother Calvin. Yet, this was not the end of the story. A time a little later, MVAO Murphy was at the Mills Community



Above: Bruce Catton with Civil War figures he whittled.
(photo from: alchetron.com/Bruce-Catton)

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SVC Ramsey & PDC Smith to Run For Department Offices



SVC David V. Ramsey

Two Brothers of Camp 14 are running for Department Office at the 2020 Department of Michigan Encampment on 06 June 2020 in Okemos.

Senior Vice Commander Dave Ramsey currently serving on the Department Council has submitted his letter of intention to run for Junior Vice Department Commander.

Past Department Commander David Smith has decided to seek election again within the Department of Michigan. He has submitted his letter of intention to run for the vacant seat on the Department Council with SVC Ramsey running for JVDC.

Both Brothers would be highly appreciative of your support in voting for them at the Department Encampment.



PDC David S. Smith



Commander's Message



Welcome to the new normal! In the last three months we have seen a change not only in the world that we live in, but we have seen a change in the world as a whole. The catalyst for that change is an invisible virus that is called COVID-19. Like small pox in the 1800s and scarlet fever this virus will and is shaping everything that we do and say, how we gather together in society, and even our health and welfare. This fact caused me to reflect on a phrase that we as Sons say before every meeting. "Established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes".

This phrase from the American's Creed comes from the Declaration of Independence signed on July 4th, 1776 by the then Continental Congress. The phrase is the last line of that document and is written with a forward looking commitment; "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor". I think that the Founding Fathers well understood and foresought that there would come times in the country's future for the need for sacrifice. Sacrifice not only of patriotic lives, but of fortunes. We as Sons of those ideas can look back and see moments that not only required American lives but the sacrifice of America's wealth and fortunes. It is in this light that I write this edition of the Commanders Corner. We as Patriotic Americans are being asked to sacrifice, to overcome a great enemy that wishes to cripple and destroy our way of life. I call upon you as Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War to take the lead in complying with those measures and directives that have been set forth to protect those in our social groups that are vulnerable to the effects of this devastating virus. Lift up to the God of your ancestor's prayers and petitions that a vaccine may be revealed and implemented in a timely and orderly way and that the praise and glory would be His and His alone.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

John E. Lantzer
Camp Commander
Robert Finch Camp No. 14



Last Veteran of the County Donations

If you would like to donate to the Last Veteran of the County project, or to sponsor a particular county, you can send a donation to the Camp Treasurer, Dale Aurand, PDC. Please send a check or money order made out to "Robert Finch Camp 14" to the Camp Treasurer along with a note indicating what county or counties you would like to sponsor if that is an interest. The Camp Treasurer's address is:

Dale Aurand, PDC
321 W. 9th St.
Traverse City, MI 49684

REMINDER: Next Camp Meeting is scheduled for 09 May 2020 at 11:30AM (1130) at the Senior Center in South Boardman, MI (special location), Last Veteran Buried in Kalkaska Co. Ceremony following

2020 Department Encampment

The 136th Department of Michigan Encampment will be held on 05 & 06 June 2020 in Okemos, at the Okemos Conference Center. This is a great chance to see how the business of the Order is conducted at the Department level. If you are interested in attending and serving as a Delegate, please contact PDC Smith. Attendance isn't required of both days, as the actual Encampment business meeting is not until Saturday 06 June. For more information and the appropriate forms for attending please see:

<https://www.suvcwmi.org/DeptEncampment/DEindex-136.php>

2020 National Encampment

The 2020 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War National Encampment will be held on 13 August - 16 August in Atlanta, Georgia at the Atlanta Marriott Buckhead Hotel and Convention Center. The National Encampment is being hosted by the Department of Georgia and South Carolina. This is a good opportunity to visit Civil War sites and see how the business of the Order is done on the National level. Information regarding the 2020 National Encampment can be found at:

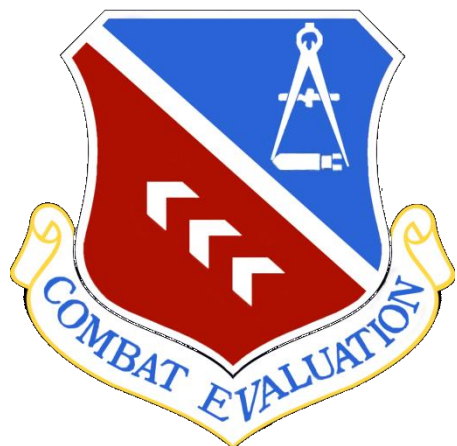
http://www.suvcw.org/?page_id=2791

The Sharpshooter - Distributed 6 times annually to: all Camp No. 14 Brothers, Auxiliary No. 9 Sisters, selected Department of Michigan Officers, selected National Officers, and friends of the Camp. Note: All Camp, Department, and General Orders and SUVCW communications are sent to Camp No. 14 Brothers via e-mail expeditiously, and are not included herein.

Commander: John E. Lantzer

Editor: David S. Smith, PDC

Northern Michigan Military Installations – Past & Present

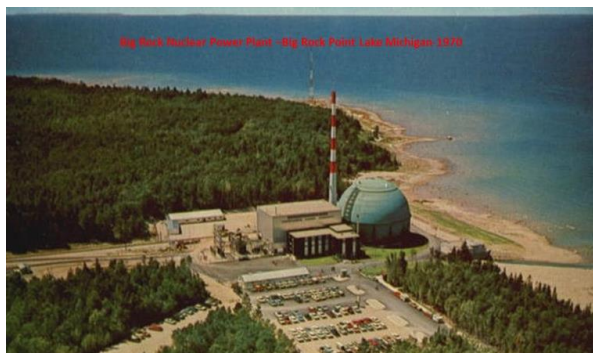


Above: Insignia of the 1st Evaluation Group, Strategic Air Command, USAF

Buildings on the site were quite rudimentary in that they were semi-permanent and were focused on the operational mission. While the site had a very small BX, there were no mess facilities, there were no medical services, and there was no housing provided. The officers and airman truly integrated within the Charlevoix and Petoskey communities.

Bombing runs into Bayshore were made at low level flight as low as 300 feet, as well as high level flight of 35,000 – 40,000 feet. Low level flights followed bombing routes called OB-9 and OB-14 or “Oil Burner 9 or Oil Burner 14”. According to various accounts, the site saw up to 400 bombing runs per week every week. OB-9 was considered quite controversial for many years, as the low altitude high speed training route originated about 70 miles north of the Consumers Power Big Rock Nuclear Power Plant, and continued over a point near or over the plant. Many bombers flying the OB-9 route flew directly over the Big Rock Power Plant green dome at altitudes of 500 to 1,000 feet regularly.

Bayshore RBSS served not only the SAC B-52 bombers launched from Michigan’s own Kincheloe AFB, K.I. Sawyer AFB, and Wurtsmith AFB, but also SAC bombers of varying types from SAC bases across the nation, and even as far as England. The flight radius of aircraft in bound for bomb runs into Bayshore was 2,500 miles. Besides the B-52 Stratofortress, other bombers included the B-47 Stratojet, the FB-111 Aardvark, and the B-58 Hustler. The B-58 Hustler left its impression on the local area with its high-altitude runs going up Lake Michigan from their home base at Bunker Hill AFB in Indiana. The B-58 Hustler would make their runs from 25 miles east of Racine, Wisconsin, passing near the Manitou and Beaver Islands, “attacking” the Little Traverse Bay area going supersonic (up to Mach 1.65 or 1,100MPH) creating the well known sonic boom over Lake Michigan then terminating at Naubinway in the Upper Peninsula. Despite their high altitude runs, the sonic boom startled many residents and caused some broken windows – including shattering laboratory glass that was 18 feet long at Little Traverse Hospital (claims were handled by Kincheloe AFB).



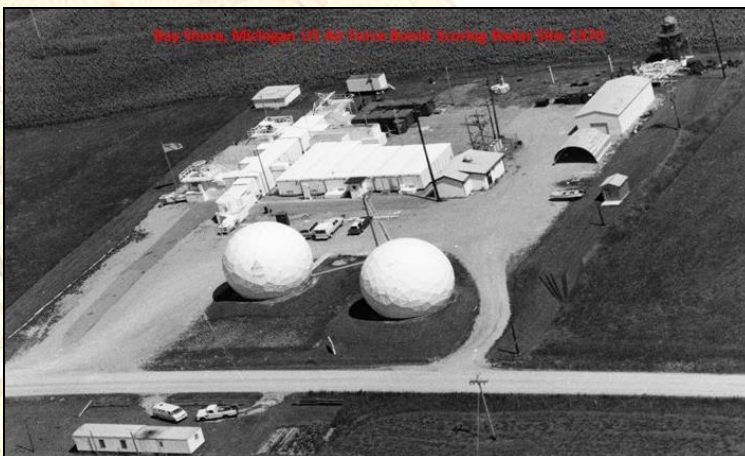
Above: Big Rock Nuclear Power Plant, circa 1970 (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1971_B-52C_Lake_Michigan_crash)

Bayshore Radar Bomb Scoring Site (RBSS)

United States Air Force
Detachment 6, 1st Combat Evaluation Group, Strategic Air Command (SAC)
Bayshore, Charlevoix County–Emmet County Border, Michigan
Activated in 1963, Deactivated in 1984

A little known United States Air Force facility in northern Michigan performed invaluable training and saw incredible activity for 21 years. That location was referred to as Bayshore Radar Bomb Scoring Site (RBSS), or Bayshore Radar Bomb Squadron (RBS).

When the site became operational on 22 July 1963, moving from Ironwood, MI in the Upper Peninsula, its host unit was Detachment 12 of the 10th Radar Bomb Scoring Squadron. Later that host unit became Detachment 6 of the 1st Combat Evaluation Group. Approximately 80 officers and airmen (peak of 123 and low of 43) served the site at any given time, operating sophisticated electronic equipment to not only score bombing runs, but to also conduct electronic warfare methods to jam the incoming SAC bomber aircraft, and to provide surface-to-air missile tracking simulation.



Above: Bayshore RBSS, circa 1970 (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1971_B-52C_Lake_Michigan_crash)

Bayshore RBSS was completely taken off line after a major fire decimated the facility on 26 December 1967. The site went back online quickly in April of 1968 in time for more B-58 Hustler supersonic high-altitude training flights.

Bayshore RBSS saw major tragedy on 07 January 1971 when a B-52C (54-2666) call sign “Hiram 16” out of Westover AFB, MA crashed during low-level flight in a fireball into Little Traverse Bay turning night to day. No distress call was made. The B-52’s wing structurally failed snapping in half due to fatigue between the engine pylons. Due to this crash, all B-52C models were retired as upon inspection each had similar fatigue life damage. All nine crew members aboard perished, and each were Vietnam Veterans. A future issue may go in-depth to this sad event.

Bayshore RBSS was closed in October of 1984, with its personnel and equipment moved to Wyoming.

Ancestor Spotlight



Headstone of Asa F. Chalker

Asa F. Chalker

Co. H, 23rd Michigan Infantry
06 December 1821 – 01 August 1879
4G-Grand Uncle of PAP Lisa Smith

Asa F. Chalker was the son of David Chalker and Lydia Smith Chalker of Vernon, Shiawassee County, Michigan. The family left Tyre, Seneca County, New York and eventually ended up in Michigan. His father David Chalker was a War of 1812 Veteran, and his grandfather Asa Smith was an American Patriot and Veteran serving in the Revolutionary War. Going further up these lines, Asa Chalker is a Mayflower descendant. Asa married Louisa Elizabeth Judd on 15 August 1848 in Flint. Louisa was also from New York originally, being born in Avon, Livingston County, New York in 1819.

Asa mustered in Company H, 23rd Michigan Infantry on 12 September 1862 at the age of 40. He was later mustered out 30 October 1863, then transferred to the Veterans Reserved Corps on same date.

23rd MICHIGAN INFANTRY

OVERVIEW: Organized at East Saginaw, Mich., and mustered in September 13, 1862. Left State for Louisville, Ky., September 18. Attached to 38th Brigade, 12th Division, Army of the Ohio, to November, 1862. District of Western Kentucky, Dept. of the Ohio, to June, 1863. 1st Brigade, 3rd Division, 23rd Army Corps, Army Ohio, to August, 1863. 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, 23rd Army Corps, Army Ohio, to February, 1865, and Dept. of North Carolina, to June, 1865.

SERVICE: The Twenty Third, which had its rendezvous at East Saginaw, was filled by volunteers from the Sixth Congressional District, comprising the counties of Clinton, Shiawassee, Genesee, Gratiot, Saginaw, Tuscola, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Iosco, Alpena, Chippewa, Marquette, Houghton and Ontonagon.

Colonel David Jerome, of Saginaw, was selected by Governor Blair as the commandant of the camp, who had charge of its recruitment and organization, which was most successfully accomplished.

They left Saginaw on the 18th. of September 1862, under the command of Colonel Chapin, proceeding at once to Kentucky, its muster rolls showing a force of 983 officers and men. Soon after its arrival, it was assigned to the Tenth Division of General Rosecrans' Army, then pushed forward to Bowling Green. While there a detachment of the Regiment was attacked by a superior force of Confederate guerrillas, but were repulsed.

The 23rd. remained at Bowling Green until May 29, 1863, employed in guarding the trains. On the 31st. of May they set out in the pursuit of Confederate General John Morgan's cavalry, then in the area. The 23rd. proceeded with the pursuit to Glasgow, Tompkinsville, Munfordsville, Elizabethtown,, then Louisville. They then proceeded into Ohio through Cincinnati, Portsmouth, Chillicothe then to Paris, Kentucky, just in time to save a railroad bridge from destruction. On the 4th. of August the Regiment proceeded to Lexington, Louisville, Lebanon thence to New Market.

They were here assigned to the 2nd. Brigade, 2nd. Division of the 23rd. Corp. Leaving New Market they proceeded on the advance into Eastern Tennessee.

During the first 2 weeks in November, the Regiment was in camp at Loudon, Tn., then marched to Lenoir, then to Hough's Ferry, where they attacked a Confederate force that was camped there, driving them from the area. The Regiment, along with the rest of the army retreated to Knoxville, with reinforced Confederates in hot pursuit. A halt was ordered at Campbell's Station, where a fierce engagement occurred, the Regiment repulsing several Confederate attacks, when the order to fall back was given, then a march to Knoxville was resumed under the most trying of conditions, through mud and torrential rains. The loss to the Regiment during this time was 8 killed, 23 wounded and 8 missing.

The Regiment participated actively in the Siege of Knoxville, until it was raised on December the 5th., then on the 7th. set out after the fleeing attackers. The Regiment pursued them to Strawberry Plains, then on to Dandridge, where the lack of tents and overcoats caused such privations, they were forced to return to the environs of Knoxville.

The following May, they were ordered west to take part in the Atlanta Campaign, arriving at Tunnel Hill, then on to Rocky Face, where they met the Confederates, taking a ridge in front of the southerners works. Moving from Rocky Face to Snake Gap, they made an unsuccessful charge on the Confederate works, losing in a matter of minutes, 63 men, killed and wounded.

Ancestor Spotlight cont'd

The Confederates, having evacuated Resaca, the Regiment joined in the pursuit all the way to Atlanta, there to participate in the Siege of Atlanta. During the pursuit they were engaged at Lost Mountain on the 17th. of June, then Kenesaw Mountain on the 27th., at the Chatahoochie River July 5th., before Atlanta, then on to Lovejoys Station and finally on the 31st. of August, halted at Decatur.

In October the Regiment set out once again, after the fleeing Confederate army under General Hood, who was then moving north up the Tennessee River. The Regiment marched north as far as Johnstonville, where they boarded trains for Columbia, Tn. where heavy skirmishing was occurring, when the army fell back to Franklin, Tn. Before reaching there the Confederates attacked them at Spring Hill, where a gallant defence was put up. They then moved in the direction of Nashville, where upon arrival went into the trenches until the 15th. of December, when it went on the offense, driving General Hood's forces from all of the positions they held, in a daring charge that drove the defenders from a stone wall they held.

On the 17th. the pursuit of the fleeing Southerners continued, and during the first three days of the march, the rain fell in torrents, the mud being fully six inches deep, which with the swollen streams, rendered the progress extremely difficult and tedious. The pursuit continued until Columbia was reached, where a halt was made and the movement ended.

The Twenty Third Corp, having received orders to proceed to Washington, the Regiment left Columbia on January 1, 1863. They marched to Clifton, on the Tennessee River, distant 250 miles, where they arrived on the 8th., boarding steamers for Cincinnati on the 16th., from there by rail to Washington, leaving there on the 11th. of February, on steamers bound for Cape Fear, N.C., reaching there on the 15th.

On February 17th., the Regiment moved against Fort Anderson, then on the 18th. the troops were advanced to within a few yards of the Fort, there entrenched under heavy musketry, moving on the Fort and occupying it on the 19th., being first to enter. They again met the Confederates at Town Creek, capturing two pieces of artillery along with 350 prisoners. They then moved on to guard the railroad at Mosely Hall, where the army was being resupplied, remaining there until April the 9th. when they advanced with the army to Raleigh, where they were encamped at the time of surrender of General Johnston's army, ending the war.

On May 3rd., they marched to Greensboro, then by rail to Salisbury, where on the 28th. they were mustered out of United States service, then sent by rail to Michigan, arriving in Detroit July the 7th., then paid off and disbanded on the 20th.

Source: <http://www.migenweb.org/michiganinthewar/infantry/23rdinf.htm> (note: misspellings, capitalization differences, and alternative spellings from the source material)

Camp No. 14 2020 Meeting Schedule

Per the order of Camp Commander John E. Lantzer, Robert Finch Camp No. 14's meeting schedule for 2020 is as follows:

11 January 2020	Elks Lodge #323, Traverse City
14 March 2020	Elks Lodge #323, Traverse City
02 May 2020 ROBERT & FRANCES FINCH BANQUET	Elks Lodge #323, Traverse City
09 May 2020	South Boardman, Kalkaska Co.
11 July 2020	Elks Lodge #323, Traverse City
12 September 2020	Elks Lodge #323, Traverse City
14 November 2020	Elks Lodge #323, Traverse City

All meetings begin at 11:30AM (1130) except "Finch Banquet" on 02 May 2020, 6PM (1800)





Frances Finch Auxiliary No. 9

Frances Finch Aux. No. 9 Initiates a New Member

The Sisters of Frances Finch Auxiliary No. 9 have approved a new Sister on 14 March 2020. Valerie Jones of Grayling is joining under her Great-Great Grandfather, Francis Xavier DeShetler, who mustered in on 09 August 1861 with Company D, 7th Michigan Infantry. Valerie's husband Kenny is a Brother of Robert Finch Camp No. 14. She will be initiated at an upcoming business meeting.

The Sisters have made a major donation to the effort for the ladies buried in GAR Plot 241 of Oakwood Cemetery in Traverse City. This donation is for the majority of the cost to supply two shared headstones for the four women.

Frances Finch Auxiliary No. 9 has a very busy schedule in the next few months (dependent on the current situation). Several events include:

2020 ASUVCW Department Encampment (TC Elks Lodge #323)	02MAY2020
Finch Banquet with Camp 14	02MAY2020
Last Veteran Buried in Kalkaska County	09MAY2020
Linwood Cemetery Memorial Day Weekend Ceremony	22MAY2020
Memorial Day Weekend Events (throughout area)	22- 24MAY2020



2019-2020 Frances Finch Auxiliary No. 9 Officers

President:	Dorothy Rongey, PAP
Vice President:	Mary Rose, PAP
Secretary:	Lisa Smith, PAP
Treasurer:	Lisa Smith, PAP
Pat. Instructor:	Debra Downey
Council #1:	Karen Goodrich, PAP
Council #2:	Debra Downey
Council #3:	Lorraine Jones
Chaplain:	Mary Rose, PAP
Historian:	All Sisters of Aux. No. 9
Press Corrs.:	Mary Rose, PAP & Lisa Smith, PAP
Girl Scout Comm.:	Lorraine Jones, Chair
Girl Scout Comm.:	Emily Breaugh, PAP
Counselor:	Mary Rose, PAP

A Camp 14 Brother and Bruce Catton Meet Twice *cont'd*

House to visit the Benzonia Public Library which is in the building. Bruce Catton saw Brother Calvin there and invited him back to his office located there to sit and have coffee and talk.

Those interactions with Bruce Catton left a large long lasting impression with Camp 14's MVAO Calvin Murphy. During their discussions Mr. Catton talked with Brother Calvin about his military service in the Vietnam Conflict. Mr. Catton stated that he though the Vietnam War was a sad and tragic war that he did not understand. While Mr. Catton was a U.S. Navy Veteran during World War I, he never brought it up during their discussions, instead focusing on Brother Calvin's service.

Brother Calvin's long lasting impression of Bruce Catton were comprised of not only his knowledge, accolades, extraordinary kindness, and his legend within the American writing community and his hometown of Benzonia. Brother Calvin stated that ***“Bruce Catton was not a run of the mill guy. He believed in what he wrote, and took great pride in it. When you read his work you felt like you were back in the Civil War. He was very special, and I felt very honored to be able to talk to him. Being in his presence was very humbling.”***

Much appreciation to MVAO Calvin Murphy for sharing this story. - Ed.



Above: Mills Cottage where Bruce Catton lived when his father was the Headmaster of the Benzonia Academy. (photo from the Mills Community House website - history section)



Above: Mills Community House in Benzonia in recent times, where Bruce Catton had his office. (photo from en.wikipedia.org)

MUFFLED ROLL FOR GRAND ARMY

by Bruce Catton

LIFE magazine, 20 August 1956

The greatest parade in American history has finally come to an end. The Grand Army of the Republic has marched off to join the shadows, and no matter how long the nation exists there will never be anything quite like it again. This chapter in our history has been closed. Something deeply and fundamentally American is gone forever.

For the Grand Army of the Republic was the living link that bound us intimately to the great morning of national youth. As long as the Army existed – even though it was at last embodied in one incredibly old man, who stood alone without comrades – the great day of tragedy and of decision was still a part of living memory. There was an open door into the past, and what we could see through that opening was magically haunted, because everything that was visible there was strangely touched by the light of the future.

Taking a look at what we had been, we could also glimpse what we must some day be. The Civil War, the greatest single experience we ever had, was both an end and a beginning. But when the final handful of dust drifted down on Albert Woolson's casket, and the last notes of the bugle hung against the sky, the door swung shut. It cannot be reopened.

In the beginning, of course, the Grand Army was simply a collection of old soldiers – very youthful old soldiers, mostly, for the organization was founded in 186, when the average veteran was just ripening into full voting age. But eventually, like the Civil War itself, it came to mean a great deal more than the men who started it ever intended.

What it originally meant was nothing very good. It came into being partly because various ex-soldiers wanted to keep alive the comradeship of army days, but mostly because clever politicians realized that great things could be done with a solid phalanx of war veterans. In no time at all it became an effective action arm for the dominant Republican party.

The Grand Army offered a forum at which vindictive orators could indulge in “waving the bloody shirt,” inviting all patriots who revered the heroes of Chickamauga and Gettysburg to maintain high tariffs, keep the carpetbaggers in power and vote steadfastly against all candidates for office who ran under the banner of the Democratic party. It fought vehemently to win pensions, first for disabled veterans and at last for all men who had ever worn the Union blue. And for two or three decades it had prodigious power.

Along with all of this the Grand Army in its early years was a rowdy, freewheeling vehicle for having fun. Each national encampment turned thousands of men loose for an unrestrained assault on the peace and dignity of some host city. The men may have lacked some of the appliances familiar to veterans of a more modern generation – the electric buzzer mounted on the end of a cane, so stimulating when applied to the posterior of a total stranger, had not yet been invented, and the G.A.R. seems not to have discovered the trick of dropping a paper bag full of water from a hotel window onto a crowded sidewalk – but the boys made out pretty well with the means available.

They had never been distinguished as soldiers for the strictness of their discipline, and the wartime habit of foraging freely on southern farms and plantation smokehouses had led to a rather carefree attitude toward the rights of folk not encompassed in the great brotherhood of arms. A G.A.R. encampment usually gave the citizens something to remember.

But the country matured, and so did the members of the Grand Army of the Republic, and around the turn of the century it began to move down the sunset slope. It got away from politics and self-interest and devoted itself, quite simply, to remembering the war – the great days that had been lived, the great things that had been done, the mysterious dedication that had enabled hundreds of thousands of young men to serve something greater than themselves. And at this point a strange change took place.

As the G.A.R.'s political influence died, its moral and emotional influence increased. It became the keeper of a great tradition, and at last it became the tradition itself, the incarnation of the tragedy and the truth that lay behind the shadowed years of the 1860s.

The old age of the Grand Army must have been rather lonely. The Grand Army belonged to a simple, unsophisticated time, and as simplicity departed and sophistication arrived it moved in something like a vacuum. Its home was the small town, the Odd Fellows Hall and the village park, the shaded cemetery with faded little flags waving forlornly among the headstones. When the Army marched it moved slowly to the ragged, inexpert rhythm of the amateur band, and as the ranks thinned year after year it became evident that the men were not so much parading past an observer as moving on toward some mystic goal of fulfillment and reunion in which no one else could share.

The life of the Grand Army men became a series of silent farewells, of Decoration Day observances in the warm May sunlight, of painfully recited tributes “to our departed comrades.” A haze of unreality lay across the present, and only the faraway past spoke with an authentic voice. The men lived in memories and yet in a queer way they seemed almost to live in the future as well, for implicit in all of their observances was some unimaginable get-together over on the other shore. And the younger generation, looking on with tolerant inattention, began to consider these men well-intentioned old bores.

How could it have been otherwise? These old soldiers lived under the strangest conditions men can know. They had reached the very pinnacle of human experience before they were of their teens.

No matter what they might do, once they left off soldiering to become civilians again, nothing could happen to them that would be as stirring and as meaningful as what they had already had. To a man who has lived through a Pickett's charge – on whichever side of the field – anything else is going to be anticlimax. These men were set apart not merely from their fellows but from life itself by the terrible and unforgettable days of their early youth.

You could see it, in the old days, at any meeting of the Grand Army post. There would be the aged men – stooped, gray men in moderate circumstances whose lives for half a century and more had been bounded by the close limits of the home town or the home county. To all appearances they had never been anywhere, had never done anything. But once, long ago, they had been everywhere and had done

Catton's MUFFLED ROLL cont'd

everything, and if they seemed detached from most of the things that were going on about them it was because their eyes still saw things that the other people present had not seen and could never quite comprehend.

They spent all of their adult lives in a pathetic isolation. As the Army grew older it came to seem like a mute and oddly unreachable survival of the olden days, forever passing in silent review, forever cut off from real communication with those who were reviewing it.

The change came, along toward the very end, when the past that spoke through these men began to get through to people once more. Here, on the 75th anniversary of the great battle, almost 2,000 Northern and Southern veterans camped once again, as they had 25 years before, on the slanting fields around the historic little Pennsylvania town, shook hands across the chasm of the dead years, and for a few days brought back to life a little of the history they had made.

It was about then that the country began to realize that it possessed in these old men a living tradition that was inexpressibly significant and precious. North and South, they stood for something: something more than just the memory of far-off battles and youthful valor, something that went to the very heart and center of the American experience.

This living tradition, obviously, was all-inclusive. When the old men in blue and gray clasped hands over the low stone wall that runs across Gettysburg's famous high-watermark ridge, they were not simply winner and loser exchanging sportsmanlike words after a stirring game of tennis. They were men who, 75 years earlier, had tried their level best to kill one another, meeting now in the final twilight with a new perspective on the meaning of their old enmity.

The Grand Army had been wrong, in the old blood shirt days; whatever the high comradeship of the Civil War meant, whatever the war itself meant, with all of its heartbreak and suffering, the United Confederate Veterans belonged in it along with the G.A.R. They were part of the same tradition.

Which was the beginning of wisdom. For it began to be apparent that something more than a romantic swords-and-roses drama lay back of these aging veterans. The Civil War had not been just an incident. In a compelling way it was somehow a continuous process, a permanent possession of the American people, and unlimited experience which had added the enlightening and ennobling element of tragedy to American life. The heritage that derived from it went so far beyond victory or defeat that the words ceased to mean anything. Out of that gigantic struggle the nation had gained a commitment to the future, a commitment which made the old lines of sectional antagonism insignificant.

And as the long parade moved on toward its end the nature of that commitment began to be clear. By fighting the Civil War the nation had unconsciously dedicated itself to two lofty, almost unattainable ideals: to the notion that there must be a unity in human society – that no man is finally an island, that we are members one of another, that our salvation must eventually lie in the striving toward brotherhood – and to the idea that human freedom is something that goes all across the board.

That dual goal will not be reached for a very long time, but the effort to reach it is what gives American life its deepest significance. The obligation to make the effort, and to keep on with it in spite of doubt and discouragement, is the strongest moral force in the world today. It is not by accident that America during the last decades has stood as the world's great bulwark against the rising tide of dictatorship and oppression. The ability to stand so – the built-in quality that compels us to stand so, and leads free people everywhere to gain new hope and courage because of our stand – was bought in the Civil War. If something was won then, that is what it was. Be it noted, too, that, North and South together, we did not win this from each other; perhaps we won it *for* each other.

To all of which the last files of the Grand Army might have assented. As the final shadows lengthened and deepened, the old men learned something, and the notion that there had been something in the war that could not be expressed in the simple words "victory" and "defeat" finally came to them.

They would at least have subscribed to the proposition that the Civil War was something to be felt rather than something to be fully understood; and it was in the realm of the emotions that their bannered parade had its greatest impact.

For the Grand Army of the Republic (precisely like the United Confederate Veterans) was above everything else a carrier of emotion. Back of it were the watch fires of a thousand circling camps, the crowds that had lined unpaved streets to cry and cheer as young men went off to war, the swift disillusionment that training camp and route march brought to adolescent innocents who had followed drums and fifes and waving flags, and the bleak boredom of comfortless bivouacs and the quick terror of battle.

What was gained and lost in all of this, and what was paid for it by the young men who lived through it, could never really be totaled up and explained; it could only be felt, and the generations which witnessed the parade of the old soldiers were touched by something beyond the bounds of their own experience. Moved by some inkling of what these old men had felt, and moved even more by the men themselves, we who looked on learned a little more about what America meant, learned to understand at least a little of the tragedy and the incomprehensible splendor of human life.

Now the parade is finished. It began in 1861 and it stopped just the other day, and in one way or another all America moved with it. The last flag has been furled and the last drum-tap has died away, and we have lost something we can never regain. One very old man died, and all of us are made a little more lonely.



Above: Albert Woolson at age 17
The last Union Veteran and Comrade of the GAR

A Brother's Great Find

During the 14 March 2020 Camp meeting, Brother David Purkiss brought in a great find – a framed print of the roster of his ancestor's company. Brother Purkiss found it online, and went to Sandusky, Ohio to secure the framed print. His ancestor is Andrew J. Baumgardner, Company K, 2nd Ohio Heavy Artillery. Mr. Baumgardner was wounded by a sharpshooter through the lung. This wound would continue to affect him after his service in the war. Mr. Baumgardner is buried in Conway Cemetery in Arcadia, Manistee County, Michigan.



Right: Brother David Purkiss with the framed print of the roster of Company K, 2nd Ohio Heavy Artillery.

Left: The gravesite of Andrew J. Baumgardner in Conway Cemetery in Arcadia.



Flashback 2016: Camp No. 14 Honors Bruce Catton



Left: PDC Aurand eulogizes Bruce Catton

Right: Camp 14 and Auxiliary 9 at the E.P. Case GAR Post Monument in the Benzonia Twp. Cemetery



28 May 2016 brought the Camp to Benzonia for three ceremonies. Robert Finch Camp No. 14 supported by the Sisters of Frances Finch Auxiliary No. 9 conducted a memorial ceremony for Pulitzer Prize winning Civil War author Bruce Catton at his gravesite in the Benzonia Township Cemetery.

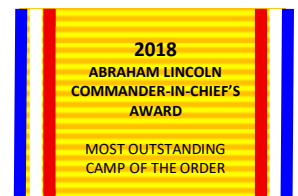
Mr. Catton was a favorite native son of Benzonia that spent a great deal of time with local GAR Veterans during his youth. A modified memorial service with eulogy was performed, honoring his historical literary genius and more importantly, his service to the Republic in the U.S. Navy during World War I. Upon completion of the Bruce Catton memorial ceremony, the participants proceeded over to the E.P. Case Post GAR Monument ("The Mushroom Monument") and performed the 1917 GAR Monument rededication ceremony. Both of these ceremonies utilized the services of Bugler Thelma Paul from Bugles Across America. Upon completion of services at Benzonia Township Cemetery, several Brothers went to the Joyfield Township Cemetery to honor two Veterans buried there with one serving the 54th Massachusetts and the other the 5th U.S.C.T. Camp No. 14 posted the colors during the ceremonies held by the Benzonia Historical Museum members.



Left: Bruce Catton's gravesite at the Benzonia Township Cemetery in Benzonia.



Robert Finch Camp No. 14 – Traverse City
Est. 1914 – The Oldest Active Camp in the Department of Michigan
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
www.robertfinch14.org



2019-2020 Officers of Robert Finch Camp No. 14

Commander: John Lantzer
ajlantzer@yahoo.com

Color Bearer: Dale Aurand, LM, PCC, PDC
stocktrac@charter.net

Sr. Vice Commander: David Ramsey
daveramsey77@gmail.com

Guide: Bob O'Hara
bobrenoh@aol.com

Jr. Vice Commander: Jim Ribby
jimribbyrc@gmail.com

Guard: Calvin Murphy
calvinm@kaltelnet.net

Secretary: David Smith, LM, PCC, PDC
wyattusmagnus@gmail.com

CW Memorials Officer: OPEN

Treasurer: Dale Aurand, LM, PCC, PDC
daurand321@yahoo.com

Graves Registration Officer: John Sawyer
sawyerc@gmail.com

Council: Jan White, PCC (Chair)
stocktrac@charter.net

Military & Veteran Affairs Officer: Calvin Murphy
calvinm@kaltelnet.net

Council: Paul Davis, LM, PCC, PDC
skillmans@aol.com

Recruiting Officer: Joseph Conger
K2rider@chartermi.net

Council: Ted Mattis, PCC
tedmattis@charter.net

Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator: Joseph Conger
K2rider@chartermi.net

Chaplain: George Goodrich, PCC
Gc_Goodrich@yahoo.com

Signals Officer: Jan White, PCC
stocktrac@charter.net

Patriotic Instructor: H.G. Smith
docsmith99@yahoo.com

Quartermaster: Dale Aurand, LM, PCC, PDC
daurand321@yahoo.com

Historian: George Goodrich, PCC
Gc_Goodrich@yahoo.com

The Sharpshooter Editor: David Smith, LM, PCC, PDC
wyattusmagnus@gmail.com