

# SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR PICACHO PEAK CAMP #1 ARIZONA CAMP-at-LARGE

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## CAMP NEWSLETTER

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July 2005

### FINAL MUSTER

Brother John Coon, age 79, passed away on April 20, 2005. John was a founding Brother of our Camp and was the Camp Treasurer for many years.

A memorial service was held at the Desert Palms Presbyterian Church in Sun City West and was well attended by Brothers of our Camp. John will be missed by his Brothers, friends and most importantly his wife Lee.

### MINUTES OF THE May 21, 2005, CAMP MEETING...

Location: Coco's Restaurant  
4514 E. Cactus Rd  
Phoenix, AZ

The spring meeting of our camp was duly opened by Commander David A. Swanson at 12:00 pm, followed by a luncheon. Twenty-five Brothers, wives and guests were in attendance.

Camp Senior-Vice Commander and Chaplain **Bob Hannon** gave a brief overview of the memorial service for Brother **John Coon**. Our Secretary/Treasurer **Jerry Bloom** read a very nice card of thanks our Camp received from John's wife Lee.

### New Brother Initiated

Brother **Reid Scudder** was initiated into our Camp...CONGRATULATIONS Brother Reid!

### Last Soldier Update

Camp Commander **David Swanson** gave an update regarding the engraving on the crypt of Arizona's last Union Civil War soldier Parker Louis Gordon. We received the final agreement from Greenwood cemetery after a lengthy delay. Plans for a celebration, which will occur on November 19, 2005, at the cemetery are underway and all brothers will be kept up to date as they become final.

### Raffle Winner

Brother **Dick McNeil** was the raffle winner of a book published by the Library of America...*Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*. The book was donated by David Swanson. Our treasury is now \$24.00 richer...thanks to all who purchased tickets.

*All Brothers are encouraged to bring items they wish to donate for future raffles to our next meeting...this is a good way to increase our treasury and have fun doing it.*

### FEATURED SPEAKER

Our Secretary/Treasurer **Jerry Bloom** gave a very enlightening and very well presented talk regarding the Civil War on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. Jerry talked about the history of the canal and its place in Civil War history. Those who missed this presentation missed a great one!

### SUMMER CAMP MEETING

Our next meeting will occur on August 20, 2005, at noon. Location: Coco's restaurant.

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## ANCESTOR INFORMATION

The following account was furnished by Brother **Paul Verhelst**. This is the account of his great-grandfather Charles H. Jones, Chief Sailmaker, U.S.N and Lieut. on the retired list. The account was written by Chief Sailmaker Jones regarding his eye witness account of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

## AN EPISODE OF HISTORY

After being honorably discharged from the Navy in September, 1863, I obtained employment in Washington in the Quartermaster's Department, under Captain D.G. Thomas, Military Storekeeper, in the Tent Department. Mr. Philip W.Y. Marreath was the Superintendent. There were employed under him about eighty or ninety sail and tent makers, and about thirty women, making horse covers out of old tents for the use of the Army.

On the night of Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1865, in company with Thomas Stanes and Louis Langley, I visited Ford's Theatre to see General Grant. We reached the Theatre early, secured good seats opposite the President's box in the second tier. None of us had ever seen the play, "Our American Cousin". When the presidential party entered the Theatre the orchestra struck up "Hail to the Chief".

My seat afforded me an excellent view of the President's box, but I could not see General Grant. Mr. Lincoln sat well back, Mrs. Lincoln sat opposite him but further front. Major Rathbone was seated in front of the President, or had the outer seat. A lady, who was one of the party, but whose name I cannot recollect, sat opposite Major Rathbone and in front of Mrs. Lincoln. As we were entering the Theatre I remarked to my companion; "There is J. Wilkes Booth." He was standing at the door of a saloon just above the Theatre, near F Street.

General Grant was not present and we were greatly disappointed. We learned afterwards that he was called away to a town in New Jersey by sickness in his family. Our being in the Theatre so early gave us a good chance to note the audience and see the arrangement and plan of the house.

The box occupied by the President was on the right side from the front entrance, and the upper box. I think it was not over six feet from the stage level - the lower box was below the level of the stage.

Those who sat in the lower box would not have their heads much above the footlights. The lower box was vacant on that night.

The first act of the play passed off smoothly, and was received by the audience with much enthusiasm. None of the actors were know to me but LaRue Keen, whom I had seen many times in New York. It was after the first scene, 2<sup>nd</sup> act, after the actors left the stage (the scenery was being shifted), that a shot rang out through the house. I thought it was fired on the stage, and a great many others thought the same, until the smoke cleared away, when I heard a woman scream and a scuffle in the box. I saw the struggle between the assassin and Major Rathbone quite plainly, and saw Wilkes Booth strike the Major with a knife. I fully recognized the assassin as J. Wilkes Booth. After cutting Major Rathbone he vaulted over the box, his spur catching in a silk flag which was festooned around the box. As he straightened himself up he struck a tragic attitude on the stage, crying out "Sic Semper Tyrannus", then ran off the opposite side of the stage. There was great excitement in the house; people rose to their feet; women screamed. A man, in full dress, came out on the stage and requested the audience to keep quiet, assuring them that the man was taken. There was a man who jumped up on the stage and ran after the assassin. He was dressed like an Army officer in undress uniform. The man who requested the people to keep cool was a good sized man, probably about 180 or 190 pounds, smooth face, and with black mustache. I tried to get out of the tier in which I was, and found the exit jammed. I then dropped down to the circle below. Some of the people were tearing up the seats and benches, and everybody was excited. I made my way towards the entrance just in time to meet the President's body being carried out. I asked a man who had been helping, and who was just relieved by another, if the President were seriously shot. He held up his hand and showed me what looked like bits of vermicelli in the palm of his hand. I exclaimed; "My God! that is part of his brain." He was shot in the back of the head. I never felt as I did at that moment. I was separated from my friends and I started on a run as the President was being carried across the street. I did not stop until I was halted by four or five men at the State Department, on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue, just at the turn. They told me that Secretary Seward's throat was cut from ear to ear, and that his son, Fred was murdered.

*(continued on page 3)*

AN EPISODE OF HISTORY (*continued*)

I ran over to Seward's house, which was across the street, opposite Jackson Square, and I asked a guard who was stationed there, and inquired if the report were true. He replied in the affirmative. They were seriously but not fatally wounded.

I then ran across the Square to our office in I street, near 17<sup>th</sup> and pulled the bell furiously. The janitor let me in. I asked if anybody was up, and he replied that Mr. Brearly, the Chief Clerk, was writing at his desk. I ran in and he turned around and asked "What's the matter?" I asked him if he had heard anything about the assassination, and on his replying in the negative I told him as quickly as possible of the sad affair. He asked me if I were sure, and I replied that I was an eye witness. He told me to remain where I was. He jumped down from the chair and ran around to the Headquarters and residence of General D.C. Rucker, the Assistant Quartermaster General, U.S.A. He was gone about five or less minutes and upon his return he ordered me to the Armory to get in uniform. All the employees of the Quartermaster General were in what was called the Quartermaster's Brigade.

Messengers were dispatched all over Washington calling all the brigade to assemble at the Armory at about 11 P.M. I was detailed to take a party of about twenty men to the White House to take down all the decorations which were put up in the early part of the week in honor of the capture of Richmond and the surrender of Lee.

I will always remember that night in the White House. In the library was a long table covered with green cloth, and reaching nearly from wall to wall, filled with official letters and papers. I cautioned all who were with me not to disturb or handle anything.

There was only one servant visible, and he was a tall, young man, the body-servant of the President. I had some conversation with him. His nationality was Irish, and he seemed very much attached to the President. He told me of some of the kind acts which he knew to President to do for soldiers and sailors whose cases were brought before him for final action. I was very much interested in hearing of them and from one who was so near the President, although I know him and had shaken hands with him several times.

It was about two or three o'clock when I left the White House with my men, and went to the War and Navy Department Buildings. After finishing these

we all went to breakfast. It was during that meal that word was brought in that our beloved President was no more. It cast a gloom over us, although I did not look for any other news after seeing pieces of his brain the night before.

The city was placed under martial law. No one could leave without permission. The authorities were scouring the country for the assassin of our martyred President. In the meantime our office was busy in procuring crape for draping purposes, and our entire force of women were set to work under the supervision of Miss. Rice, the forewoman, making rosettes for draping all the Public Buildings, including the White House.

It was 9 A.M. when I reached the White House, for the purpose of draping it. It was about noon when we finished. Just after dinner, while we were at work on the War and Navy Departments, I was standing on the sidewalk in front of the building directing the festooning of crape, when a closed carriage drove up. The driver called to me to open the door, which I did, and to my astonishment General Grant stepped out, followed by the President of the B & O. Railroad, and another gentleman whom I did not know. They all entered the War Department. Before we finished General Grant came out smoking a cigar, with his military hat pulled well over his eyes. He walked down the street in the direction of the Winder Building, where General Halleck had his headquarters.

After we had finished the War and Navy Departments, I took my men down to drape the Winder Building. I knocked on the door of the first room front. Getting no reply, after knocking several times, I entered, and there sat General Grant, who looked up from a desk where he was writing. I excused myself and told him my business. He said, "All right, go ahead, carry out your orders."

After finishing these I had orders to drape several houses, among the number being secretary Stanton's and General Hardee's. If I remember rightly, we went to Secretary Stanton's first. We had considerable difficulty in getting into the rooms. We were looked upon suspicion by Mrs. Stanton and the servants, although I showed a pass signed by the Secretary of War, himself, and countersigned by General D.C. Rucker, U.S.A. All of my party were in uniform, including myself. After finishing there we went to General Hardee's home, and from there, I think, to General Meade's home.

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AN EPISODE OF HISTORY (*continued*)

One incident I shall always remember, which was as follows: Next door to our repair shop was a fine residence occupied by an old gentleman, and his family, who was a gambler by profession, and a bitter rebel. As I was about to enter our shop he stopped me and asked if I would drape his house, he furnishing all the material. I told him I could not do it unless he got permission from Captain Thomas. He asked me if I would not state his case. He was a man over seventy years of age. His eyes were full of tears as he said, "I am a bitter secessionist, but I loved Abraham Lincoln." His manner affected me so much that I made a personal request to the Military Storekeeper, and I was permitted to do the work.

In order to get out all the drapery the women were obliged to work overtime up to 9:30 and 10 P.M., and I was detailed by our Superintendent to see them to their homes. I had a general pass from the Secretary of War.

I think it was the most strenuous week I ever put in.

While the President's body was lying in state in the rotunda of the Capitol, we draped the dome, which was the hardest job we had yet. After that was done I received orders to go to the White House and drape the platform and landing leading from the East room. While doing this Mrs. Lincoln sent down a request that we stop the noise. We were hammering, driving in nails and tacks. I told the men to cover or muffle their hammers. We finished about midnight, and afterwards I went to my rooms, took off my clothes for the first time in six days.

I will say in concluding this article, that I never had such an exciting time in all my life. It seemed to have months crowded into it for me. The City of Washington was under martial law until the President's body left for Springfield, Ill. I was one of the grooms at the funeral in Washington, and was detailed to go with the body to its final resting place. The arrangement was changed and I did not go.

In looking back after forty-three years, it seem like a dream. All those whom I knew in Washington at the time of the national tragedy are dead, and I hope, in heaven. General Rucker; Captain Thomas; Wm. C. Brearly, Chief Clerk; P. W. Y. Marreatt, the Superintendent; Thomas Thompson, General Superintendent; the two who were with me at the Theatre, Thomas Stanes and Louis Langly, as far as I know are dead and gone.

I will say, and I believe, that I was the first person to notify the authorities of the assassination of President Lincoln, and by that means the certain identification of the assassin, J. Wilkes Booth.

I have been asked many times to write my personal recollection and experience of this sad affair, but I thought all had been written and said that what I could say or write would not be worth while. I knew President Lincoln well and had shaken hands with him many times. Our workshop was close by the White House, K Street between 16<sup>th</sup> and 1/2 and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. Tad Lincoln often came over for a flag or tent. President Lincoln was very fond of Tad, his youngest boy.

Chas. H. Jones

Chief Sailmaker, U.S.N. and

6-30-1908

Lieut. on retired list.

Navy Department,  
Washington 7 January 1875.

Sir,

You are hereby appointed an Acting Sailmaker in the Navy of the United States.

Enclosed herewith is a blank Letter of Office which having executed you will return to the Department with your letter of acceptance.

If, after you have served six months at sea, you shall furnish the Department with satisfactory testimonials from your Commanding Officer, a Warrant will be issued to you bearing the same date of this appointment.

By direction of the Secretary:  
Respectfully,  
George H. Bell  
Secretary of the Navy.

Acting Sailmaker  
Charles H. Jones,  
Master.

Chas. H. Jones

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## THE U.S. NAVY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR

From

"**Life in Mr. Lincoln's Navy**" by Dennis Ringle

President Abraham Lincoln's call for a blockade of the Confederate coastline and the accumulation of additional wartime duties required the U.S. Navy to expand rapidly. The navy's ability to recruit men from all walks of life, with the majority of the recruits possessing little or no maritime background, filled the manifest of the proliferating fleet. What is more important, however, was the navy's ability to weld this heterogeneous group of men into an efficient fighting force that helped defeat the South. In addition, these men successfully ushered in the age of iron ships and laid the foundation for America's emergence as a global power by the end of the century.

During the Civil War, approximately 118,000 men served in the Union navy, blockading over 3,500 miles of southern coastline, convoying merchant ships, pursuing Confederate commerce raiders, and conducting combined operations with the Union Army. This rapid expansion of forces and missions was the product of necessity, opportunity, the vision of a few, and most importantly the sweat and ingenuity of the enlisted sailors. Every aspect of the sailor's background and life—from his recruitment, clothing, and training to his wages, daily shipboard routine, entertainment, diet, medical treatment, and combat experience—influenced his performance at sea and helped pave the way to final victory.

When President Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office during the first week of March 1861, 70 percent of the navy's ships were on deployment; only twelve ships were in home waters. The navy had six ships in the East Indies, three in the Mediterranean, three off the coast of South America, eight patrolling the African coast, and seven in the Pacific Ocean. On 12 April 1861, the Civil War began when Southerners fired upon Fort Sumter, located in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. One week later, President Lincoln ordered a blockade of the rebellious Southern states and directed the navy to conduct the blockade by a competent force large enough to execute his proclamation." This presidential order required the navy to initiate an

effective blockade of 185 harbors and approximately 3,500 miles of southern coastline. To accomplish this task, the secretary of the navy, Gideon Welles, had at his disposal only forty-two ships and 7,600 men. To make matters worse, 322 naval officers resigned their commissions and offered their services to the South .

The president soon realized that the current naval force of 7,600 men was insufficient to execute a competent blockade. On 3 May 1861 he authorized the navy to increase its ranks by 18,000 men for one to three years . Three months later Congress authorized the navy to enlist as many men as it deemed necessary to operate its ships efficiently. By the end of the war four years later, 118,000 wore the Union blue of the U.S. Navy.

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## NAVAL PUNISHMENT

*From Bluejacket.com*

The Colonial *Naval Rules of 1775* regarding punishments, state, "No Commander shall inflict any punishments upon a seaman beyond twelve lashes upon his bare back with a cat-o'-nine tails; if the fault shall deserve a greater punishment, he is to apply to the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy in order to the trying of him by a Court-Martial, and in the meantime, he may put him under confinement."

In 1799, Congress passed a law that restricted a Commander of a naval vessel to applying no more than twelve lashes on the bare back of a sailor or marine, unless more were ordered by a court-martial. The law, as noted above, was abused in many cases.

New Hampshire Senator Hale in 1850 added an anti-flogging clause to the Naval Appropriation Bill. Commander Uriah P. Levy had been instrumental in securing Senator Hale's interest in the measure. Hale showed that one sailor had been sentenced at court-martial "to receive 500 lashes, and actually received 400." This punishment was given in twelve lash installments. The attempt to ban flogging didn't pass as the Navy Department reported that it would be impossible to maintain discipline at sea without this form of punishment.

Finally, in 1851-1853 Commodore R. F. Stockton, Senator from California, further restricted flogging by legislation. But it wasn't until 17 July 1862, that Congress finally abolished flogging entirely.

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**NEWSLETTER NOW  
ELECTRONICALLY PUBLISHED**

*BY DAVID SWANSON*

If you received this newsletter by regular mail and have an E-mail address *please* send it to me.. Future newsletters and other Camp items will be E-mailed to you on a timely basis...you will be the first to know...actually, I suppose that depends of who reads their E-mail first... but you will be saving your camp money.

You will *only* receive an E-mail from the Camp for Camp business. I will not sell your E-mail address to advertisers (even if I knew how to do it)...come to think of it, there is that up coming trip to Scotland ...anyway... *the newsletter will still be mailed (postal mail) to those who don't have an E-mail address or to those who simply want it mailed.*

All of this is possible because of our Eagle Scout Coordinator, **John Conrad**...who is able to combine all of my scribblings into a PDF file (Adobe Acrobat) which can be read on any computer.

My contact info is on the right side of this page. Operators are standing by.... so E-mail me now!

## Camp Meeting Info

Our next Camp meeting will take place on August 20, 2005 at noon. Place: Coco's

Please join us for the summer meeting of our Camp. Our speaker will be Brother Al. Harrica. Al will talk about the events in his published book "They Saved a Nation...1861-1865...A Soldier's Story...How They Lived-How They Died." See old comrades and meet new ones....Have a cold iced tea ... win the raffle....but most importantly...enjoy yourself!

Please make your reservations today....see page 7.

Our November meeting will occur on the 19<sup>th</sup>...put it on your calendar.

## Refund of Luncheon Costs

Due to the new luncheon arraignments (ordering from a specially prepared menu) our Camp can now refund money sent from Brothers to our Secretary/Treasurer for luncheon reservations. If you are unable to attend *you must contact the Secretary/Treasurer and advise him.*

## CAMP ROSTERS AVAILABLE

All Brothers for whom I have an E-mail address have received our Camp roster.

Brothers who don't have E-mail capability can have one mailed or can pick up a copy at the Summer meeting.

Please call our Secretary/Treasurer Jerry Bloom if you want a copy mailed to you.

Once again, if I don't have your E-mail address please send it to me....thanks.

## Camp Officers for 2005

### Commander:

David A. Swanson (480) 515-2798

E-mail: DavidJan1854@cs.com

### Sr. Vice-Commander:

Bob Hannan (480) 380-9153

E-mail: hsuvcw82az@aol.com

### Jr. Vice-Commander:

Larry Fuller (480) 945-9816

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Jerry Bloom (602) 955-3091

### Camp Council:

Dick Graffin: (602) 870-1728

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Bob Young (602) 841-7037

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### Chaplain:

Bob Hannan(602) 380-9153

### Camp Historian:

Bob Hannan (480) 380-9153

### Eagle Scout Coordinator:

John Conrad (480) 488-4703

E-mail: jrconrad@post.harvard.edu

### Newsletter Editor/Publisher/Copyboy

David A. Swanson

# MEETING NOTICE

Our next Camp meeting will be held on **Saturday, August 20, 2005 at noon.**

Location: Coco's Restaurant  
4514 E. Cactus Rd. (602) 996-9851

All Brothers, wives and guests are invited to the summer meeting of our Camp.

Lunch will be ordered from a menu specially prepared for us. There will be a choice of seven different entrees, so there will be something for everyone. The cost is \$16.09 per person which includes lunch, soft drinks, tea, coffee, and gratuity..

Please complete the form below and mail as indicated.

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## **LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS ---August 20, 2005**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Luncheon Reservations:                      Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and mail to the Camp Treasurer.

Make checks payable to: Picacho Peak Camp #1 SUVCW

Mail to:

Jerry Bloom, Camp Secretary/Treasurer  
4323 N. 28<sup>th</sup> Way  
Phoenix, Arizona 85016  
Phone (602) 955-3091